

CBW

Number One
For PCV Professionals

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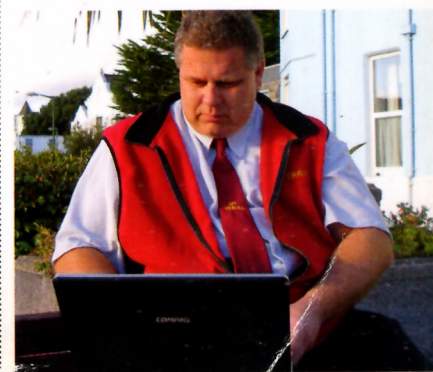


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Thirty years not out

It was in this week 30 years ago that a magazine called *Coachmart* first appeared. Some 1,500 issues later – and having changed its name to *Coach and Bus Week* in February 1992, bringing together *Coachmart* and *Bus Business* – CBW continues to be the most highly-regarded publication for coach and bus operators, and the ancillary companies and suppliers of this great industry.

Through industry good times and bad times, CBW has continued to inform and entertain its readers each week. Carrying an unrivalled mix of news, features, insight, comment, exclusives and advertising, carefully designed to keep operators and suppliers abreast of all the happenings across this public transport sector.

As a paid-for, subscription title, CBW has managed to remain independent over the years. Not being solely reliant on advertising revenue allows the magazine to report on many issues and companies that are not of interest to titles that rely totally on pleasing advertisers to survive. CBW's many advertisers are hugely important to us, but so are our thousands of subscription-paying readers who demand an unbiased, broad, all-encompassing perspective on the industry each week.

As a subscriber to CBW you can be sure that you are receiving a magazine that strives to present you with a much wider range of material each week than any other title in the marketplace. With ever more editorial pages each issue, delivered to your door by first class post every Wednesday, we aim to keep you as informed as possible – covering vital business issues, legislation and offering real insight into the market in every issue.

This week's issue, at 116 pages, is CBW's biggest ever issue; so large in fact that our printers have had to perfect bind it, rather than staple it, just to produce it! In addition to the weekly fix of CBW, subscribers also benefit from 12 monthly issues of the leading coach tourism magazine *Out&About*, our annual tourism and industry directories and a number of other specialist 'Essential Guides' each year.

We have big plans for the future, as we continue to serve the industry by providing the most informative and reliable read each and every week. If you've picked up this copy of CBW at Euro Bus Expo, and don't normally subscribe, shouldn't you be ensuring that your business benefits from being informed first every week by a magazine and team devoted to keeping you ahead of the game?

It's just £69 to subscribe for a year. Why not give our subscriptions department a call today on 0870 8304969 and start receiving the original and best weekly trade magazine for the coach and bus sector.



Andy Sutcliffe
Editorial Director

Coach and Bus Week is a supporter of the following organisations:



Promoting Travel and Tourism by Coach



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Briefly

■ Eurotunnel says it would like to remind its customers that it is currently operating a revised departure frequency with one passenger shuttle departure every 90 minutes in each direction on weekdays and two departures every 90 minutes on Saturdays and Sundays. To avoid over-extended waiting times during this limited service operation, it is important that booking times are respected. Coach operators should allow sufficient time for their journey to the Folkestone or Calais terminal and arrive at Check-in at least 45 minutes before departure for both outward and return journeys. Eurotunnel is aiming to resume a full service by mid-February 2009.

■ Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT) has awarded a three-year bus shelter upkeep contract worth almost £680,000 to Mitie Olscot, the first time a combined contract for bus shelter and information case cleaning has been awarded by the authority. The move is aimed at achieving cost efficiencies and ensuring consistency in standards. Mitie Olscot has been responsible for both jobs under separate contracts since August 2005. Cost efficiencies will be achieved, as all information cases adjacent to bus shelters will now be cleaned monthly, at the time of the shelter clean.

■ A planned strike by Stagecoach Bluebird staff this week has been called off. About 480 drivers, mechanics, cleaners and office staff, who are members of the T&G section of the Unite union were expected to be involved this week, but the action has now been postponed pending a ballot, following last-minute talks with the company. An overtime ban is also suspended for ten days. Stagecoach says it recently offered staff a 9.76% pay increase, which would see drivers receiving £9 an hour until March 2010. The company has a 17-year strike-free record.

Councils in the driving seat

A reworking of the Local Transport Bill confirms quality partnerships will be introduced at local authority's discretion. Peter Woodhouse reports for CBW.

Most operators will be aware of the main areas covered by the Local Transport Bill (LTB). It contains amendments to the community bus permit rules, further rules relating to competition and the change to the new Integrated Transport Authorities.

But one area of the LTB deals with the extension of the remit of Quality Partnership Schemes (QPS). The main and very important difference between a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) and a QPS is that a local authority does not need an operator's agreement to bring in a QPS. On top of that, non-members of a QPS can be prevented from using the facilities if they aren't signed up to it. On the face of it, the authority is in the driving seat.

So when the first draft of the LTB was published, operators were concerned to note that the LTB extended the QPS model to allow authorities to set local service frequencies, timings or maximum fares. In particular, operators were worried that LTAs could impose unreasonable or non-commercial terms upon them. Further, some raised concerns that in order to ensure the success of QPSs then sub-standard operators could register competing services thereby undermining the scheme.

The government responded with two proposals to amend the LTB, the operation of which are likely to become critical to the extended QPS arrangements. These amendments are in respect of:

■ admissible objections; and



Geoff Hoon outlines changes to LTB

■ registration restrictions.

Under the current proposals (the Draft Quality Partnership Schemes (England) Regulations), LTAs can only specify frequencies, timings or maximum fares as "standards" if there are no "admissible objections" from "relevant operators".

Basically, a "relevant operator" is an operator who is, or has applied to run local services with stopping places in the QPS area. The LTA must publish a notice of the proposed QPS and the objection clock starts running immediately. The operator is likely to have made its objections known previously but still must, within 28 days, serve on the LTA a written objection:

■ stating why it is a relevant operator;

■ explaining why it objects; and

■ enclosing evidence to support its case.

If the decision goes against the operator, it has 14 days to refer the matter to the Traffic Commissioner.

Operators can properly object on the grounds:

■ that it would not be practicable to provide the service because of extra vehicles or staff that would be required;

■ that it would not be

commercially viable to provide services of that standard taking into account the cost, income (including generated revenue) and the likely "rate of return".

Larger operators may well have more difficulty here since they will have more inherent flexibility. But perhaps more importantly, if an operator cannot meet an upgraded frequency requirement by buying another vehicle/driver, but could by reducing layover, will a Traffic Commissioner take that into account when holding a disciplinary inquiry into punctuality? That is hardly likely, yet arguably unjust to the operator.

Those operators who have experience of concessionary fares will find the commercial viability principles eerily familiar. An operator who wishes to object under these provisions is likely to have to demonstrate cogent evidence to support its case. This evidence may include detailed expert financial evidence on commercial viability.

A QPS may include registration restrictions (also called registration criteria) ostensibly to protect the viability of the QPS but which may in practice deny some (probably smaller) operators the ability to operate in the market.

For those affected operators, the draft legislation (PSV Registration Restrictions) (England and Wales) Regulations provides that an application for registration may nevertheless be submitted. If the application relates to a QPS area, the Traffic Commissioner must notify the LTA and all relevant authorities who each have a right to make representation. S/he must then decide whether the application, if granted, would be "detrimental" to the provision of local services under the QPS.

The stated intention here is to allow flexibility for "beneficial" expansion of services, while preventing "destabilising" competition that would undermine the operation of the QPS.

It follows that an operator seeking to provide services in a QPS area without matching

the service standards, needs to provide good arguments as to why there would be no adverse effect on the QPS. For example, the operator may be able claim that its proposed services were geographically discrete from those operators already providing services and therefore would have no effect on it.

This decision may be taken at a Public Inquiry. It is proposed that there is a right to appeal to the Transport Tribunal (by a relevant operator or LTA as the case may be) against a decision of the Traffic Commissioner.

Reaction to the Bill

"The Local Transport Bill offers some exciting opportunities to enhance the way we plan, regulate and develop our region's public transport. We believe it can help speed up the implementation of major projects and bring substantial improvements for passengers," said a spokesperson for Centro.

Neil Scales, chief executive and director general of Merseytravel, told CBW: "This is a very important step and means we can continue to develop a single, integrated public transport network that is accessible to everyone. We have successfully fixed the trains and ferries in Merseyside. Now this piece of legislation gives us the opportunity to put the bus network on the same firm footing."

Future debate

As with any new law, its full effect is only going to be known after it has been introduced and areas of uncertainty have been tested. Areas that are currently unclear and are likely to lead to future debate include:

- what is practicable;
- the definition of commercial viability;
- how a new operator joins a QPS;
- what happens when an old one leaves;
- to what extent can operators work together yet comply with the restrictions on competition.

The early draft of the QPS proposals did not inspire many in the industry that a true partnership was intended. The later introduction of the principle of "admissible objection" has significantly redressed that balance, but it remains to be seen whether registration restrictions unfairly affect smaller operators and/or whether the commercial viability test unfairly affects larger operators.

What is clear is that some operators will seek to work within the new QPS scheme, and some operators will do their level best to stay outside it. Whichever one you happen to be, you need to know how the whole thing works and how best you can protect your business.

Peter Woodhouse is a specialist transport lawyer at Stone King Sewell LLP based in Bath. He was listed in The Lawyer Hot 100 of 2008. He can be contacted on pmw@skslaw.co.uk.



Ballincollig Coaches of Co Cork have just taken delivery of two Volvo B7R Sunsundeguis. Purchased as part of a programme of fleet modernisation, the new coaches will be used for touring throughout Ireland and also into Scotland.

The family run-firm had not bought Volvo for some years but were impressed by the B7R/ Sunsundegui combination.

"It's very stylish looking so helps to create the right impression; it's

very comfortable; and there's great luggage space – all of which is perfect for our requirements," explained managing director, Donal O'Callaghan. "Add to that the fact that the Euro/Sterling rate is so favourable to us at the moment, there was no excuse not to buy!" Ballincollig plan to use the coaches on incoming tours which make up a large part of their business.

"We shall be very busy over the next few months, particularly with French and

American students requiring sightseeing tours, and these coaches really are ideal for the task," said Donal.

Established 20 years ago, Ballincollig's 15-strong fleet ranges from six seaters to full-size executive coaches. In addition to its own tour programme the firm runs a variety of breaks for incoming tourists, ranging from historic sightseeing and pilgrimage tours to short breaks for fishing, golf, gardening and art enthusiasts.

Bill Cameron, OBE

Bill Cameron, OBE, ADL chairman, died suddenly last Tuesday aged 71.

A stalwart of the business since the early 1990s, he was CEO in the days of Mayflower Bus and Coach and became chairman of Alexander Dennis upon its formation in 2004.

Colin Robertson, CEO, said of him: "No single individual has had

a greater influence on the fortunes of this business in recent years, particularly in terms of rescuing Alexander and Dennis from the clutches of Administration, and subsequently in bringing Plaxton into the fold to create Britain's most successful bus and coach company.

"Bill Cameron, I know, was a proud ambassador of the business. He will be much missed by all of us"

He is survived by his wife Carol, son Euan, who is head of operations at ADL's Falkirk facility, and by his daughter Hazel.

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Briefly

The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has decided not to refer the merger of Stagecoach and Rapsons to the Competition Commission under the provisions of the Enterprise Act 2002. A Stagecoach Group spokesman told CBW: "We are pleased the OFT has cleared our acquisition of Highland Country Buses and Orkney Coaches. We look forward to integrating the operations into our existing Stagecoach business and improving the quality of services to our customers."

The Number 4 bus service operated by National Express in Solihull is being scrapped at the end of January and is being replaced by the 6A bus service, but this will no longer serve Cheswick Green or Baxters Green and instead will go via Cranmore before continuing on its usual route into Solihull via Monkspath and Widney Manor.

Several services that collect students from deprived areas in Shropshire could be axed. Arriva Midlands has indicated that four services in Telford could be cut because of changes to their operations. The buses take students from the south of the town to the College of Arts and Technology and New College which are based in Wellington in the north. The routes are subsidised by Telford and Wrekin Council.

Shropshire County Council has announced dates for the Christmas park and ride services in Shrewsbury. A late night shopping service will run every Wednesday from 19 November until 17 December. After 1830hrs the buses will operate from the three sites at Harlescott, Meole Brace and Oxon every 15 minutes with the last buses departing the town centre at 2115hrs. From 16 November until 21 December, a Sunday service will operate from the Meole Brace and Oxon sites only.

Neil Renilson to retire from Lothian Buses

Transport Edinburgh chairman takes early retirement

Neil Renilson, 52, is to leave his jobs as chief executive of Lothian Buses and chairman of Transport Edinburgh Limited.

Lothian Buses had seen strong passenger growth until city roadworks in the spring saw numbers drop by a reported 8%.

The firm's chairman, Pilmor Smith, said he was sorry Mr Renilson was leaving. Mr Renilson said he was leaving at the end of the year to allow his successor time to prepare for the introduction of trams in Edinburgh.

Mr Renilson, was due to take over the running of a new tram system in the city once it was complete in 2011 under his job role for Transport Edinburgh Limited, as well as continuing to lead Lothian Buses.

He said: "It had always been my intention to retire at 55, and I am happy to have been able to take the opportunity to retire



Neil Renilson stands down

a little early, which will allow the company to adjust to my departure well in advance of the introduction of the trams.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed my ten years at Lothian, and wish to thank all the staff for their help and support during my time with the company. It is gratifying to be able to leave in place a sound, successful business with a dedicated team of staff who I am sure will further develop the UK's best bus company."

Mr Smith said: "I am sorry that Neil will be leaving us, and would like to express my gratitude to him for his sterling efforts over the past ten years in modernising and reshaping the company."

"Ian Craig, managing director, has been with us now for two years, and we have every confidence Ian, the team of directors and the managers will continue to drive the company forward as we enter challenging and exciting times with the construction of the tram moving into top gear from early next year."

Tom Aitchison, Edinburgh City Council's chief executive, said: "I was involved in the appointment of Neil 10 years ago and knew then that we had appointed someone very special."

"Neil has driven the company forward and under his leadership it has achieved impressive results. He is hugely committed to public transport and has transformed Lothian Buses into an award-winning company."

Motorbikes get green light in bus lane trial

Motorcycles will be allowed to drive in London bus lanes under an 18-month trial, from January 5.

Mayor of London Boris Johnson said motorcyclists will be able to share red route bus lanes with buses, cyclists and licensed black taxis through the introduction of experimental traffic orders. However, the majority of bus lanes on roads operated by the London boroughs will remain out of bounds to motorcycles with critics claiming the new rules will create confusion. Any unauthorised entry to a bus lane could result in a Penalty Charge Notice of £120 from TfL or the local authority.



Bikes will move in from January 5

Boris Johnson said: "Londoners know that I am determined to make it easier for them to get from A to B in our great city. And I have long been staggered that while motorcyclists can use bus lanes in many other cities and some of our

boroughs they were not allowed to use the Transport for London red routes that criss-cross the capital.

"One of the ways we can ease congestion is by encouraging more people to get on their bike, whether pedal or powered, and I believe they should be able to share our bus lanes successfully and safely. At the end of the trial period I will listen carefully to the views of all our road users and then make a decision about whether this should be a permanent arrangement."

Red routes are the roads in London that are owned and maintained by TfL. Five per cent of the roads in London are red routes but they carry 33% of the city's traffic. They are owned by TfL whereas the other 95% of the roads in London are owned and maintained by the 33 boroughs, each of which decides about the rules on their roads and carries out the respective traffic enforcement.



Ten new Visionaires are now in service in the capital

Optare Visionaires touring London

London tour company Big Bus Tours has put ten Optare Visionaire open-top double-deckers into its fleet on sightseeing services.

The 82-seater buses were delivered from Optare's Blackburn plant fully fitted out and painted and lettered in the distinctive burgundy and cream Big Bus livery ready to immediately enter service. Three are fully open-topped and seven have a covered area over the front two bays.

Gerry Price, engineering director at Big Bus Tours, said: "The fit and finish is very good and exactly to our specification. And the fact that the buses were supplied complete and ready to enter service is a major plus for us, making the whole process much simpler and faster."

The windows in the Visionaires are bonded glazed and a front nearside tree bar is fitted. Electronically operated Hanover LED destination blinds have

been specified that use coloured numerals.

The Fainsa Metropolis seats are colour co-ordinated with the interior of the buses to create an attractive and inviting interior. The contoured seats are untrimmed to withstand all weather conditions and for easier cleaning. Each has a plug point for a headset with a choice of commentary in one of eight languages.

Big Bus Tours specified the buses on Volvo B9TL chassis with the 9.4-litre D9B engine, rated at 260bhp. The engine meets Euro 5 emissions limits through the use of SCR technology and is therefore fully LEZ compliant.

It is matched to a six-speed ZF Ecolife automatic transmission designed to cope with frequent stop-go traffic. This has an integral retarder to contribute to good fuel efficiency.

Big Bus Tours operates every day of the year except for Christmas day, with a fleet of 80 tour buses, which are also available for corporate charters and private hires. The company has a further 46 buses operating tour services in Dubai and a partnership with another tour operator in Philadelphia.

Arriva teams up with green travel to work scheme

Arriva is giving employers the chance to offer their staff up to 41% savings on bus travel to work through the innovative Greentravel2work incentive scheme created by employee benefits provider P&MM.

Developed in support of the Government's Green Travel Plan, the scheme enables organisations to offer their staff significant tax and National Insurance (NI) savings when purchasing an annual bus pass.

Through Greentravel2work, employees at participating organisations pay for their bus pass by monthly deductions from their pay packet – a salary sacrifice. The amount paid by the employee is exempt from income tax and NI contributions.

Mike Woodhouse, marketing

manager for Arriva UK Regions, said: "In the current economic climate where people are increasingly watching what they are spending, we believe that buses offer a way for people to reduce their travel costs."

P&MM is believed to be the first benefits provider to launch and offer Greentravel2work as an outsourced product. Richard Davies, head of employee benefits at P&MM, commented: "Working with Arriva, P&MM is now able to implement schemes for organisations both locally and nationwide."

■ Employees of the participating companies or employers considering offering this benefit can find out more about the scheme by visiting www.salary-plus.co.uk/greentravel.

£42m investment in East Midlands transport

A package of proposals to help reduce congestion and improve road safety in Derby and to revitalise Loughborough town centre have been approved.

Transport minister Paul Clark announced £42.8 million for two new projects.

Paul Clark said: "The scheme in Derby will not only

provide better travel conditions for all road users by improving the connectivity of the Inner Ring Road around Derby, but will also help reduce the volume of traffic travelling through the City.

"Loughborough's town centre will be revitalised by removing traffic from the High Street,

making the town centre a much more attractive and safer place for shoppers and workers. It will also mean that bus passengers and motorists are no longer stuck on this stretch of road in lengthy queues – so will be safe in the knowledge that they can get where they need to go on time."

Briefly

The dates for this year's Brugge Christmas market and ice-rink have changed. They are now taking place on November 28, 2008 until January 4, 2009. Events still taking place on the November 21 include the snow and ice sculpture festival at the stationplein (www.icesculpture.be) and the Christmas Event at the Old Saint Johns Hospital, 38 Mariastraat (www.happenings.be) which are both free paying attractions in the city. Further information can be found at: www.visitflanders.co.uk/.

Summerfield Coaches of Southampton went into administration last week. The operation, based at 247 Aldermoor Road, is run by Tracey and Colin Ralph. Transport manager Peter Pullen said it came as a complete shock. Nine jobs will be lost, including the two directors. The firm operates nine vehicles ranging from two 53-seaters to two 16-seaters which were used on a mix of work, from school contracts, to private hire and tours. Having been trading for around 40 years, Mr Pullen blamed the current financial climate for the company's demise.

The link road from the M42 southbound carriageway to the M5 northbound carriageway at M5 junction 4a will be closed overnight from 2100 to 0500hrs from Wednesday 5 November to Saturday 8 November (three nights) for bridge parapet repairs. A diversion route will be clearly signposted.

The M1 northbound will be closed between J6 and J7 overnight on Saturday 8 and Sunday 9 November. All closures will be in place from 2200 to 0500hrs. Fully signed diversion routes will be in place. During the closures, traffic from the M1 northbound at junction 6 will be diverted via the A405 north to the M10 at junction 21, then via the M10 northbound to M1 junction 7.

National transport networks – coaches are the answer

'Coaches must be central to any integrated transport policy' says CPT

The Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT) welcomed the Secretary of State's review of a national transport network, which was announced last week.

Geoff Hoon, Secretary of State for Transport, announced a programme of work to ensure that the best use is made of our national transport networks and accelerate the process of identifying where future expansion is needed.

He said: "Our national transport networks are essential for people going about their day-to-day lives. In order to stimulate Britain's economic growth and support our position as a leading world economy it is essential that we make the right long-term investments in our transport infrastructure today and that we plan for future growth, in a way which is consistent with reducing greenhouse gas emissions overall."

The work will build on the recommendations by

Sir Rod Eddington and the government's October 2007 response, 'Towards a Sustainable Transport System'.

CPT Chief Executive Simon Posner said: "An efficient and effective road network is vital to both the economic and environmental future of the United Kingdom. It is important that we make the best use of our road space and that what we do is for the benefit of all road users.

"On motorways, the coach is by far the most efficient and environmentally friendly use of road space. It is essential therefore that coach passengers are given the road space they deserve. Coaches are the original high occupancy vehicle and must be integral to any integrated transport strategy – particularly the introduction of High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes (HOVL).

"We look forward to working with Ministers on this review and we must ensure that, as Britain's most environmentally sustainable form of long distance transport, the coach is at the centre of future government transport policy."

Tour Providers partners with German wholesaler

Tour Providers have partnered with German wholesaler Travel Company to offer expert handling services and better buying power for British coach operators visiting Germany and for German operators visiting the UK.

Christopher Kingsley, founder of Tour Providers expressed his delight at the arrangement saying: "There is so much potential for new tour ideas in Germany and Gabrielle, owner of Travel Company has been working with me to develop interesting new tours suitable for British coach groups. Equally, Tour Providers have created packages which Gabrielle is selling to German coach operators."

Mr Kingsley envisages similar partnerships with other European wholesalers. "I'm always looking



Christopher Kingsley, Tour Providers and Gabrielle Boehm, Travel Company discuss tours in the German wholesaler's brochure.

for small companies with similar profiles to Tour Providers and with the same enthusiasm for the development of new tours and commitment to high standards. By nurturing these partnerships we develop both our outbound and inbound business knowing that our partners wish to do the same and are keen to really look after our groups because they expect the same in return.

"One significant benefit for coach operators is that, because our partners will also be active in the domestic coach market in their own country, their local knowledge and experience helps to introduce interesting new hotels and features not often seen in UK programmes. Likewise we are helping them to feature new ideas to their coach tour market."



Customers visiting Henley in Arden-based Johnson's Coaches on Friday were startled to find that many of the staff had turned up for work dressed from head to toe in pink. But it was all in a good cause. Laura Cranmer, part of the front office

reservations team, organised a "dress in pink day" to raise funds for the breast cancer campaign.

Laura said: "We do this every year and ask staff to dress up and have fun, but at the same time raise money for this excellent

charity that has done so much to provide funds into research into breast cancer. Everyone entered into the spirit of the day and customers and visitors, as well as our own staff helps us raise some £230 on the day."

Wanted – bus & coach operators, says Flights Hallmark

Flights Hallmark has been awarded the prestigious contract to supply passenger transport to Rotary International for their annual convention at the NEC Birmingham in June 2009.

A spokesman said: "We anticipate that the project will be a demanding one, not only because of the scale of the requirement – up to 250 buses and coaches at peak times, but also because of the high standards of quality and customer satisfaction that Flights Hallmark has built a reputation on.

"We have opportunities available for coach operators from around the UK to supply 49

seat executive coaches, ground crew and control centre staff between 18-24 June 2009.

"The core of the work is the provision of shuttle services between hotels in the wider West Midlands area, the NEC complex and venues arranged by the host organising committee."

Operators interested in learning more about the opportunity to take part in this high profile event are asked to join the firm for a coffee on Stand C24, Hall 5 at Euro Bus Expo at the NEC this week.

Alternatively call John Bywater on 07866 508730 to order an information pack.

Delivery of the 10,000th Futura by VDL Bus & Coach

VDL Bus & Coach has reached a major milestone with the delivery of the 10,000th Bova Futura.

On Friday, October 10, this extraordinary coach was handed over by Wim van der Leegte, chairman of the board of management of the VDL Groep, to Harz-Weser-Werkstätten.

Director Christoph Lorbacher and head of the workshop Heinz-Gundolf Rech travelled to VDL BOVA in Valkenswaard on behalf of Harz-Weser-Werkstätten to receive the keys. This memorable occasion was also attended by the directors of VDL Bus & Coach, Rémi Henkemans and Henri Koolen, as well as by director Peter Schmidt and by Uwe Boje, representatives of VDL Bus &

Coach Deutschland.

The 10,000th Futura is a FLD 104-365, a 10.4-metre, 42-seater and is fitted with a DAF PR 265S Euro 4 engine. This vehicle, which is now the ninth Futura FLD for Harz-Weser-Werkstätten, is also fitted with an extra-wide door with a lift for the handicapped. The shorter 10.4 metre version was chosen for the suitability of its turning circle.

After 26 years in production, the sales figures for the Futura, a classic, established mid-range coach option in Europe, have remained continuously high.

"It is a unique attainment in the coach world to produce 10,000 copies of a single model over such a long period of time," said a statement. "The completely characteristic design of the Futura is just as recognisable now as in 1982. Trustworthiness, reliability and comfort combined with a high residual value have made a major contribution to the good reputation which the Futura has established over the years."



The 10,000th Futura goes to Harz-Weser

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Operator hits back at Powys DRT

PCC transport staff should admit their failings, says operator

One of the operators of Powys County Council (PCC)'s Demand Responsive Travel (DRT) has hit back at claims made by the authority last week (CBW 856), saying PCC has tried to save face by blaming operators for its mistakes.

As reported in CBW 856, at a recent PCC board meeting, members were informed that five DRT routes had been under threat due to a high cost per passenger figure, which ranged from £17 to £63, well above the authority's £10 threshold. PCC claimed the high figure was a result of operators not correctly recording concessionary pass ticket data.

This week however, Andrew Brown, of Oswestry Community Action, which operates one of the routes previously under threat, publicly hit back at the claims in the 'Montgomeryshire County Times', which had earlier published the story criticising the actions of operators.

Mr Brown said: "I'll be pursuing PCC to ensure they issue a public retraction of that report. In actual fact, we recorded the information as they asked us to and any error was at the transport department not doing the figures properly. At the very least in the next board meeting they should clarify the facts so that board members and the public know the facts. If I lived in one of the communities served by the DRT services, I would think that the withdrawal of the bus was due to errors made by bus service operators - and this is completely untrue. "I've got four years of records in total that they asked me to fill in. We submit the data every month because if we don't then we don't get paid. However, I recognise that there has been a lot of upheaval in PCC's public transport department over the last year."

Oswestry Community Action operates route T82, which links

Llanwddyn, the community at Lake Vyrnwy with Llanfyllin on Wednesdays and Fridays.

"I don't know about other operators but they told me they're no longer going to pay for the Friday service unless it runs," Mr Brown said. "So basically they're halving the cost of the contract - that's where the money has been saved."

Mr Brown has also criticised the lack of communication that PCC have had with the operators.

"The decision to withdraw that route was not communicated with us. I first heard about it on the BBC and the reprieve in The County Times. We've had no contact from PCC at all during

this process. It makes us look like idiots if our passengers know before us.

"In the report, it says that prior to making the decision to axe the routes, PCC met with all operators. That is untrue - they met with us after I contacted them to ask 'What's this about my route being axed?'"

Formerly known as Oswestry Dial-a-Ride, Oswestry Community Action operates six vehicles. Using volunteer drivers, three local bus services are run in Shropshire, while a solitary route operates in Powys.

A spokesman for PCC said: "During meetings with service operators, it became apparent

that they were not recording and submitting information relating to concessionary fares. This resulted in the council under recovering income and therefore inflating the cost per passenger. We discussed this with the contractors and it was agreed that it would be rectified with immediate effect. It was also agreed that operators would, in an attempt to reduce service costs, amend the route(s) they were operating where passengers were not making use of the service(s). From June of this year all operators have been providing the required information, including concessionary fares data and all on-bus revenue.



Five drivers at P&O Lloyd Coaches have successfully completed their Driver CPC qualification.

Based at Bagillt, near Holywell, Flintshire, the drivers undertook the 35 hours of training with Flint-based Chevron Training.

John McKenna, partner in Chevron Training told CBW: "We're very pleased to be working in conjunction with P&O Lloyd, who are very proactive in terms of the training and staff development."

Feedback from the drivers included that although they are professional drivers, with many years of experience between them, they found the course "interesting and enjoyable," "informative" and "well presented and professional."

David Lloyd of P&O Lloyd told CBW: "I've found Chevron to be very professional and good to deal with. They're a local firm, so it's convenient. I want to be ahead of the game - I don't want to be part of the

last minute dash in a few years' time, so I've booked the rest of our drivers in the next six months in batches of five."

Pictured left to right are: Karen Gilson, partner in Chevron Training and drivers David Jones, Darren Jones, Graham Langley, Carl Jones and Graham Hewitt, and Mervyn Jones, Chevron training instructor.

■ Contact Chevron Training on 01352 761106 or visit <http://www.chevrontraining.co.uk/>.

EU regs changes benefit Arriva passengers

Arriva North West & Wales has announced improvements to its services in the Conwy and Dwygyfylchi areas.

From Sunday, the company's X9 service (acquired from KMP earlier this summer) has been re-routed via Conwy, with the result that four buses an hour operate from the town to Llandudno, Monday to Saturday. The route previously ran via the Conwy tunnel, thus cutting off the town itself. The change has come thanks to the relaxation of the EU drivers' hours regulations.

Another beneficiary of the relaxation of the rules is the village of Dwygyfylchi. As previously reported in CBW, in order to comply EU drivers hours regulations, Arriva was forced to terminate its service on the edge of the village, which proved highly unpopular among residents. However, the village will now benefit from a half hourly service to Llandudno restored on route 5 as a result the changes.

Tom Balshaw, operations director for Arriva said:

"The changes to European law have helped us implement a more flexible approach to our longer routes."

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Sherwood Shuttle honours community representatives

New Solo SRs to mark re-branded Arriva route

Arriva Southern Counties' three new Optare Solo SRs were given an official launch in Sherwood on Friday, prior to entering service the next day.

The 15-minute frequency service between Tunbridge Wells and Sherwood estate has been re-branded 'the Sherwood shuttle', which is reinforced on new bus stop flags and timetables.

To help foster closer links with the Sherwood community, each bus is named after a local person who has served their community in different ways for considerable periods of time. An inscription is carried in front of the entrance doors acknowledging their good work, and this is repeated on a notice inside the buses.

For the launch event, the three names were displayed on the Hanover destination equipment, these being voluntary worker Jenny Bays, head teacher Keith Marden and the Reverend Brian Senior. All three were awarded a four-weekly ticket as well.

Arriva's marketing manager, Richard Lewis, said: "I'm delighted that we've been able to invest £300,000 in more new



From left to right: Rob Farnes (representing the Rev. Brian Senior), Keith Marden, Greg Clark MP and Jenny Days.

buses for our Tunbridge Wells depot to bring higher standards of comfort to customers on the Sherwood route.

"We have not named buses after local people before, but this has gone down exceptionally well and the three people who were recommended to me are clearly very well respected."

Like all new Arriva buses, the 'Sherwood shuttle' Solo SRs are fitted with state-of-the-art digital

CCTV systems.

The Mayor of Tunbridge Wells, Councillor Mike Rusbridge, was very supportive of Arriva's willingness to invest in new buses for the town and was impressed by the significant passenger growth which followed the introduction of six ADL Enviro 200 Darts at the end of 2007 on the cross-town Service 281, marketed as the 'town centre bus link'.

New range of paint guns from DeVilbiss

CV painters and suction sprayers are benefiting from the new 'Pro' range of compliant spray guns from DeVilbiss.

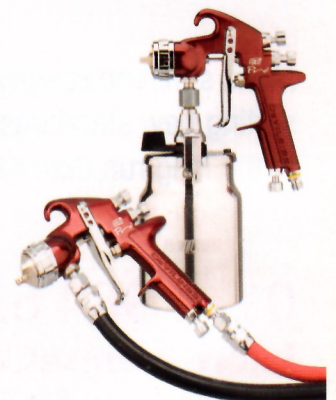
The all-new GTi Pro Pressure and GTi Pro Suction guns have been launched with all the benefits of the new GTi Pro series, including a more ergonomic gun body with improved fit, feel, comfort and controls.

All are suitable for use with a suction cup or pumps, tanks or remote feed cups and with four compliant air caps, either gun can be used for primers, solids, metallics, bases and clears.

There's a range of pressure and suction tip sizes for varying viscosities and control preferences and a whole new air valve design for ultra smooth, kick-free triggering and control. The guns are fast and easy to maintain due to user-friendly fittings and adjustments and have a rugged drop-forged body with anodised finish for protection.

European marketing manager Ian Bunker said: "This is the ultimate pressure-fed air-atomising spray gun to be offered to the commercial vehicle and car refinishing sector. It offers excellent synergy with all the latest car and CV painting systems - and it has amazing application speeds and superb finish quality."

■ See www.devilbiss.com for more details on the new range.



CV Painters' GTi Pro

Stagecoach offering free travel for new parents

Stagecoach launched an eco-partnership offering free bus travel to new parents using real nappies for their babies last week.

The Perth-based group is offering a week's free travel to encourage new parents to sign up to the Perth and Kinross Real Nappy Network (PKRNN). PKRNN, a partnership between local parents, Perth and Kinross Council and healthcare professionals, provides information, advice and support about real

(washable) nappies. Parents and carers wishing to give real nappies a go can hire a full kit of nappies and accessories to try at home on their own baby. This lets them see just how easy they are to use and can help with deciding which system to purchase.

Some eight million disposable nappies are thrown away in the UK every day with 90% going to landfill. Real nappies have around half the carbon footprint of

disposables, which are believed to take hundreds of years to decompose.

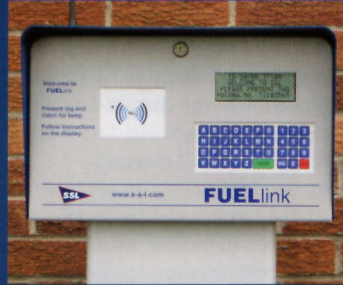
A typical five-mile trip to work by car emits more than 2kg of CO₂ compared to 1.5g if you take the bus, which can result in significant CO₂ savings over a year. A recent Stagecoach survey showed that bus travel in Perth can be up to 69% cheaper than commuting by car, offering savings of around £700 a year.

Brian Souter, Stagecoach Group chief

executive, said: "Climate change is an issue that is of real concern to our customers and local authorities face tough new environmental targets on landfill, air quality and recycling.

"This is a perfect partnership. Real nappies and sustainable bus travel are both better for the environment. They can also save families hundreds of pounds a year, which in the current economic climate is an incentive to go green."

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Megabus expands again in America

Four new destinations and 100 new Van Hool deckers for Stagecoach-owned Megabus

Stagecoach has announced the expansion of its budget inter-city coach service to four new locations in North America.

Megabus.com is now available for booking to and from Albany, N.Y.; Rochester, N.Y.; Syracuse, N.Y. and Niagara Falls, Ontario, all with direct routes from New York. Services start on December 4. It brings the number of locations served by megabus.com's New York hub to 11 cities and follows on from a recent \$60m order for nearly 100 new Van Hool double deck coaches. The new 81-seat wheelchair accessible vehicles are equipped with safety belts, reading lamps, power outlets, free wi-fi, and toilets.

Dale Moser, president and COO of megabus.com, said: "We are delighted to be expanding our service to these new cities. In the current tough economic climate, budget products like megabus.com are exactly what consumers are looking for to make their

dollar go further.

"We believe this is a market with huge growth potential as growing numbers of people ditch their cars for high-quality, low-cost coach travel to beat the credit crunch, rising fuel prices and higher household bills."

Megabus.com began offering fares for as little as \$1 in the United States in April 2006 and now covers 13 US states and one Canadian province, attracting

commuters, students, business and leisure travellers. Around two million passengers have now travelled with the market-leading budget carrier in North America.

Megabus.com's research suggests 90% of customers have used the budget service as an alternative to the car, train or plane. Some 60% are former car users, 19% previously travelled with an airline and 11% used to take the train.



Budget coach firm goes from strength to strength in the States

Six more Solos for Gibson's

Six more Optare Solos have gone into service with Renfrew operator Gibson Direct.

The Solos will operate on Gibson Direct's commercial route 68, which runs to a seven minute frequency between Paisley and the new Braehead shopping and leisure complex.

The decision to acquire more Solos follows good performance from a batch of six delivered in 2006. All are powered by the Cummins ISBe engine, which at Euro 4 develops 201bhp. Owner Robert Gibson says that there's always plenty of power on tap to ensure a good schedule.

At 10.2 metres the new Solos are to the longest length offered, with room for 37 seats and 21 standees.



Six new Solos delivered after good experience of the 2006 batch

"Solo has proved a good vehicle for us to run," says Mr Gibson. "Their futuristic styling and bright and airy interior gives them great passenger appeal."

"My drivers like them too for the comfortable driving position and the good layout of the controls, and my fitters find them well put together and easy to maintain with all main

components very accessible."

Since Robert Gibson started Gibson Direct in 1996 he has built up a strong network of commercial and subsidised services in West Glasgow. As well as stage carriage operations, the company runs a Glasgow-wide Dial-a-Bus, service and coaches, with the current fleet now numbering over 40 vehicles.



First in South Yorkshire has won its second 'green' prize in two months for the quality of its environmental management policies. First was presented with the environmental award at the Rotherham Chamber of Commerce Business Awards. The award is given to the Rotherham business that has done the most for the environment and First was chosen for making real energy savings. Last month First's fleet of Wrights Volvo double deckers that operate on the X78 route from Sheffield to Doncaster via Rotherham, won the Business Section of the 2008 Care4Air Awards. Care4Air is South Yorkshire's air quality awareness campaign and is run by the region's four major councils (Sheffield City Council and Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Councils) as well as Travel South Yorkshire. Bob Hamilton, MD for First in South Yorkshire, said: "As the leading operator in Rotherham, First has a unique opportunity to improve the environment in which we live by helping to reduce traffic congestion and air pollution."

Pictured is First's facilities manager John Pitt (left) and BBC presenter Harry Gration.

CPT gives schools advice

The transport select committee has heard from the CPT, on the back of its submission on the topic of school transport. After receiving the submission, CPT was called to give verbal evidence, and Steven Salmon (director of policy development) and Giles Fearnley (president) stepped up. It was decided John Burch would not due to his involvement with the Yellow School Bus Commission.

The first topic was the possibility of a national concession for young persons. Operators (represented by Les Warneford of Stagecoach and Leon Daniels of First) expressed concern about the perceived value for money of such a concession.

Discussions about encouraging children to use public transport in later life raised the issues of dedicated drivers. It was said construction and use regulations would have to be changed. A detailed report is due shortly.



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RoSPA welcomes Transport Committee road safety report

Society welcomes call for road accident investigation branch to parallel aviation, marine and rail

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents has welcomed a report from the House of Commons Transport Committee saying that more needs to be done to investigate deaths in work-related road accidents.

Kevin Clinton, RoSPA Head of Road Safety, said: "RoSPA has been campaigning about managing occupational road risk for more than ten years and we believe the Health and Safety Executive could have a much greater part in this."

The report - Ending the Complacency: Road Safety Beyond 2010 - estimates that

there were between 750 and 1,000 deaths on the road last year linked to someone being at work. In it, there are calls for a road accident investigation branch to be established, which would serve a similar role to its aviation, rail and marine equivalents.

The report says: "It is anomalous that the vast majority of work-related deaths are not examined by the Health and Safety Executive, purely because they occur on the roads. The Government should review the role of the HSE with regard to road safety to ensure that it fulfils its unique role in the strategy beyond 2010."

It also says the Government should work with employers' organisations and trade unions on the issue, including an

evaluation of its Driving for Better Business initiative. Fiscal and financial incentives are suggested to encourage employers to use vehicles with additional proven safety features, which could help increase safety features in the wider UK vehicle fleet.

RoSPA recently launched a major research study aimed at helping young drivers to stay safe when they are on the road as part of their job and is seeking the views of managers who employ 17-24-year-old drivers. It will lead to a better understanding of the safety issues involved in these employees getting behind the wheel for tasks such as making deliveries, going to meetings or travelling between sites. See www.rospace.com/roadsafety/youngdriversatwork.



Javac's TEXA K610

Reading invests in new air con charger

Reading Transport has invested in a full air-conditioning charging system for their workshop to repair and service their fleet of buses and coaches.

The company has chosen the TEXA K610 bus evolution, the latest unit from Javac UK. "Cabin air-conditioning for driver comfort is essential," Dave Kingston, Javac sales manager tells CBW. "The benefit of maintaining the vehicle AC keeps the driver cool and comfortable and can be considered a health and safety issue, promoting safer operation of a passenger vehicle."

Bus design traditionally relies on a substantial quantity of glass. Even with double glazing and reflective coatings temperatures soon increase in direct sun shine. It's not so critical for passenger comfort because passengers don't tend to be seated for too long between stops, but drivers on the other hand are seated for the full shift. It follows that if their personal environment is cool and dehumidified they will stay more alert and focused for longer.

Driver fatigue (especially towards the end of the rush hour shift) can contribute to minor accidents so neglecting the repair and maintenance of the vehicles AC can be false economy. Forward thinking companies like Reading Transport are becoming more aware of this and are including AC servicing in their regular maintenance schedules.

Javac provide a complete air-conditioning service solution with hands on equipment training and C&G2078 refrigerants handling as required.

■ For more information contact Javac UK on 01642 232880 or email sales@javac.co.uk.

Transpeak lives on after Kickstart

After three years, the 'Kickstart' funding which helped extend Trent Barton's long-running Manchester-Nottingham transpeak brand has now come to an end. Most of the timetable is set to continue, but the deficit in free travel funding has forced cutbacks, says the operator.

The aim of Kickstart is to stimulate growth on routes that would be too much of a risk for a commercial bus operator alone. It is a partnership between the operator and local authorities with funding coming from central government. There are no guarantees, but the hope is always that at the end of Kickstart period the service will be able to continue unsupported.

Kickstart funding on transpeak paid for extra journeys, the refurbishment of some of the buses and a massive marketing



As kickstart runs dry, cutbacks have been made

and awareness exercise.

Commercial manager Mark Greasley says: "At the end of the three years Kickstart has succeeded in securing an hourly timetable between Nottingham and Buxton for most of the day. In fact some journeys have been so busy that we have worked with our partners at Derbyshire County Council to put on extra buses during the summer months.

"But the sting in the tail is that no-one could have foreseen at the time the enormous impact

that the Government's free travel scheme for over 60's would have, especially on routes like this. Growth in this market has exceeded 100% in three years.

"But because the reimbursement we receive is inadequate, this has placed a burden on transpeak which it just cannot cope with financially. Ironically this means that we will have to make some economies to keep transpeak afloat. These will be largely at the Manchester end, but we will also no longer be able to serve Derby Rail Station."

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THIS DEVICE WILL NOT ALLOW A VEHICLE ENGINE TO START IF THE DRIVER IS OVER A PRE-SET ALCOHOL LIMIT.

“A driver killed a mother-of-two when he crashed into her car the morning after a night drinking...”



Arriva facing a bright future

Interim management statement points to strong earnings in mainland Europe

Arriva says its diverse nature and the fact that more than 60% of its revenues come from government contracts gives it a high degree of resilience in the uncertain economic climate.

In an interim management statement, the group said the outlook for 2008 is positive with substantial revenue and earnings growth for the year anticipated.

“Group revenue increased by more than 57% year-on-year in the nine months ended 30 September 2008, reflecting growth in mainland Europe and the effect of the CrossCountry rail franchise which began in November 2007. Across all three divisions close attention to cost control has been maintained.

“Year-on-year revenue in our mainland Europe division is up by 51% for the first nine months, reflecting acquisitions, new tender starts, and the impact of the euro strengthening.

“In our CrossCountry rail franchise, like-for-like passenger revenues have increased by 11.9% for the period from 6 January to 11 October 2008. Arriva Trains Wales passenger revenues have increased by 12%.

“In our UK regional bus business, revenue for the first nine months has increased by 6.3% year-on-year, and mileage in London has increased by 4.5%.”

In the UK, the introduction of

more than 460 new buses into service during 2008 is continuing, representing an investment of more than £63 million.

“We continue to work with the industry to make constructive contributions to the remaining stages of the legislative process for the Local Transport Bill. We support the Government objective of encouraging even closer partnership working between operators and local

authorities to make productive investments in improved services,” continued the statement.

In mainland Europe, Arriva pointed to increasing its position in Madrid with the acquisition of De Blas, and the purchase of 80% of Eurobus Invest, the largest privately-owned Hungarian bus group. In August Arriva was awarded a seven-year Swedish rail contract to operate services between Göteborg and Orebro.

The group’s financial position remains robust with a strong balance sheet and strong operational cash flows. The hedging policy is protecting the group from material impact during 2008, where the final average price paid for fuel is anticipated to be 28.2 pence per litre, before delivery and duty.

82% of Arriva’s anticipated 540 million litre fuel requirement for 2009 is fixed in price, with additionally around 14% covered by indexation and 4% remaining unfixed. The current average price fixed for 2009 is 41.3 pence per litre. Assuming the same volumes for 2010 Arriva has so far fixed around 38% of its anticipated requirement at an average price of 34.3p per litre.



Arriva’s 460 new deliveries into the UK continue

Stagecoach’s UK bus revenue is up again

Stagecoach gave an update on trading in advance of a series of meetings with analysts this week. The Group plans to announce its interim results for the six months ending October 31 on December 3.

Since the last update on August 28, the overall trading performance of the Group has been in line with expectations. Like-for-like revenue growth in each of the main businesses is shown in the panel, right.

The UK Bus Division continues to trade strongly with like-for-like growth in revenue and passenger volumes. Total revenue, including the impact of acquisitions and disposals, was up 11.7%.

The UK Rail Division continues

like-for-like growth in both revenue and passenger volumes. The reported growth of 8.3% includes the negative effect of the transfer of Reading-Brighton train services from South Western Trains to another operator, which has reduced the reported growth rate by around 1%. The UK Rail Division’s profit for the year ending April 30, 2009 will include the costs of the Group’s bid for the South Central franchise.

The reported like-for-like revenue growth for UK Rail does not include East Midlands Trains. For the 24 weeks ended October

12, the revenue of East Midlands Trains when compared to the equivalent businesses under their former ownership was 14.2% higher than the previous year.

The North American business continues to benefit from favourable conditions for bus and coach travel and the group says it is pleased with the development of Megabus North America.

“Although the uncertain economic environment reduces medium term visibility of financial performance, the Group’s portfolio of businesses should be relatively resilient to

the effects of declining economic growth,” said the statement. “The Group will continue to critically review the cost base of its rail businesses and will implement savings if and when appropriate.

“As consumers experience increased costs in general and higher motoring costs in particular, the Group’s good-value bus, train and tram services continue to attract passengers from other modes of transport. In particular, value products such as Megabus in North America and advance-purchase rail tickets in the UK are gaining in popularity. This combined with increasing environmental awareness, the Group’s strong operational performance and new and innovative products continues to drive revenue growth. Accordingly, whilst we continue to closely monitor economic developments, the outlook for the Group remains positive.”

SUMMARY

UK Bus	24 weeks ended 12 October 2008	9.2%
UK Rail	24 weeks ended 12 October 2008	8.3%
North America (including megabus.com)	five months ended 30 September 2008	8.4%
Virgin Rail Group	24 weeks ended 12 October 2008	<0.1%

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First order for Volvo hybrid

Luxembourg's Sales-Lentz first in line to claim new 7700

Volvo Buses has received its first order for the new 7700 hybrid bus from Sales-Lentz, a Luxembourg-based bus operator, which has ordered six with delivery starting in 2009.

The order was signed in the presence of Luxembourg's Transportation and Environment Minister at a large transportation symposium arranged by Sales-Lentz. The topic discussed during the symposium was how public transport can contribute to fulfilling the Kyoto Protocol.

"One way to contribute is to operate with buses that have lower fuel consumption and thereby lower emissions," said Jos Sales, one of the partners of Sales-Lentz. "But to be able to choose such buses on a large scale, it must be economically viable. This is the reason why we selected Volvo's hybrid buses. Despite the higher purchase

price, over time they yield a lower cost per kilometre due to the substantial fuel savings."

The buses will be used in normal route traffic in and around Luxembourg City, preferably on stretches with frequent stops so that the hybrid technology can be fully optimized.

The first bus will be delivered to Sales-Lentz in autumn 2009 and the other five in 2010 when series production begins.

Volvo has chosen to develop a parallel hybrid in which a small diesel engine and an electric motor operate individually or together. The bus stores braking energy in batteries and uses this energy to power the electric motor. The diesel engine is shut down at bus stops and the bus drives away from the stop emission free and nearly noiseless powered by the electric motor. When the bus reaches 15-20 kph, the diesel engine starts up again.



Volvo's 7700 Hybrid is heading to Luxembourg



Mercedes-Benz Tourismo is specially specified for Police duty

German Police buy 33 Tourismo coaches

Germany's Federal Police organization has expanded its vehicle fleet with "heavy personnel carriers" by concluding a contract for 33 Mercedes-Benz Tourismo coaches.

The vehicles will be stationed throughout the Federal Republic and used on police operations such as football league matches, demonstrations or disaster relief, where large numbers of personnel need to be transported rapidly.

The Tourismos are equipped with the usual features of operational police vehicles: rotating beacons (blue lights), flashing front beacons and a special signalling system. Facilities have also been

incorporated for stowing 40 protective helmets and riot-control shields.

The telecommunications and data processing equipment required for operational assignments was also installed by the EvoBus ServiceCenter. Additional power sockets for notebooks and mobile phones were a supplementary requirement by the Federal Police. Two tables are provided for situation briefings while en route to an assignment, and as further special equipment six of the 33 Tourismo buses are equipped as driver training vehicles. They feature 32kW air conditioning systems.

Toronto's hybrid woes spook Ottawa

Ottawa bus operator OC Transpo is reportedly extremely apprehensive about its expected intake of hybrid buses following the poor experience of Toronto Transit Commission.

Ottawa is scheduled to take delivery of 202 hybrid Orion VIIIs, over the next two years, from Daimler Buses North America.

However, with Toronto experiencing serious problems over the life of its batteries – 18 months instead of the projected five years – OC Transpo has become decidedly nervous about taking the plunge into hybrid bus operation and its fears were fuelled further by Toronto's bid to switch outstanding orders for 250 hybrids to conventional diesel buses.

Toronto had also stated it was

only achieving a 10% fuel saving when 30% had been predicted.

Ottawa's move seems rather churlish due to the advanced technology contained in the vehicles it has on order. The new generation Orion VII hybrids are equipped with lithium-ion batteries rather than lead-acid. Not only are they much lighter and compact, they are claimed to be virtually maintenance free. Also, Toronto's lack of fuel economy is largely due to the bulk of its routes being of a suburban nature operated at higher speeds with limited stops and therefore unable to make maximum use of regenerative braking to recharge batteries. Toronto has said it will only take more hybrids if they feature lithium-ion batteries and it is looking into the possibility of converting the existing fleet to the newer technology.

Ottawa has already made plans to ensure its hybrids are run on low-speed routes with frequent stops. It has two of the vehicles currently on trial.

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Regional News

CBW takes a look at the big issues where you live in our round-up of the regions. If you've got a local issue you would like us to cover, contact Rupert King at rupert.king@rouncymedia.co.uk

NORTH

Merseytravel's environmental policies have been given international approval. Following an independent audit, the organisation has retained its certification of the international standard for Environmental Management Systems (EMS), ISO 14001.

To gain certification an organisation must demonstrate that it is working to limit its environmental impact, training staff, complying with legislation and delivering continual environmental improvement.

Neil Scales, chief executive and director general of Merseytravel, said: "We have driven the national passenger transport agenda on environment issues since we became the very first passenger transport body in the country to produce an Environmental Strategy 12 years ago.

"We were also the first PTA in the country to gain certification five years ago and environmental sustainability remains a vital element of our future transport plans."

■ Nexus is to subsidise the M12 community bus service for a further year. The M12, operated by A Line Coaches connects the Fairways Estate in Wardley with Metro at Pelaw.

A Nexus subsidy supports the M12 on a Saturday, meaning there is a bus every 15 minutes to get people to work, to shops, leisure activities and local services. During the week the service runs commercially.

Nexus says it will review Saturday passenger numbers over the next year before deciding if the subsidy is to continue beyond October 2009.

Ken Kemp, transport integration director for Nexus, said: "The M12 is a useful link between the Fairways estate and surrounding neighbourhoods and Pelaw Metro.

"We have extended our subsidy to pay for a bus every 15 minutes during the day on Saturday, but this will be kept under review over the next 12 months to see how many people use the service."

Nexus subsidises around 300 bus services in Tyne and Wear.



■ Primary school children across Hartlepool have been invited to enter a competition to name 19 new buses that operate in and around the town.

Stagecoach North East invested £2million in new vehicles in June this year and has asked the children of Hartlepool to help to name each bus.

Every class will nominate a name and then the suggestions from the 30 primary schools in Hartlepool will be submitted to Stagecoach for consideration. If all schools and all classes participate that should give the bus operator a total of 210 names to choose from.

The 'Name That Bus' competition closes on November 10. The winning entries will have their names stuck onto the front of the vehicles and each of the winning classes will have the opportunity to have its picture taken alongside the newly christened bus.

John Conroy, managing director of Stagecoach North East says: "We are launching this initiative to give the local community the opportunity to become more involved with the bus network and to help children learn about the benefits of public transport. "We have invited all of the 30 schools in the town to join in the competition and we are looking forward to naming each of the new buses. We hope that

Briefly

■ Cleveland police say two passengers, a baby and a 75-year-old woman, suffered injuries when a missile was thrown through a bus window in Middlesbrough. A number of passengers were showered with glass and the baby suffered minor cuts while the 75-year-old woman was taken to hospital for treatment to a head wound.

■ Following the completion of bridge strengthening works outside the Victoria Centre in Nottingham, the bus stops on Lower Parliament Street have been re-opened to Nottingham City Transport services from Sunday. During the closure of the stops, it was found reliability improved for services running along Lower Parliament Street and NCT are keen to maintain this.

■ First's 213 service from Broadwindsor to Weymouth is being cancelled. Dorset County Council transport development official Peter Impett wrote to passengers on October, 15 saying: "The county council has approached other operators to see whether they are prepared to operate the service, but the only offer requires additional public subsidy."

once the vehicles are named that the children look out for their bus and that the wider public begin to recognise the named vehicles on their route."

MIDLANDS

A bus driver sacked after urinating in public near his vehicle has lost his claim for unfair dismissal.

Pargat Singh, 63, from Coventry, claimed unfair dismissal by Travel West Midlands when he was sacked last year following a complaint from a passenger. A woman passenger said she had seen him drop his trousers and crouch down on grassland near the Ricoh Arena. The tribunal said the bus company was entitled to view his dismissal as an appropriate sanction.

Mr Singh, of Alderman's Green, had also claimed he had been racially-abused by a passenger following the incident. However, the tribunal dismissed the claim.

Tribunal chairman Christopher Gaskell said the bus company is a public service organisation and its drivers the public face of the organisation.

"The respondent (Travel West Midlands) depends on public confidence in order to run its business efficiently," he said.

"It was well within the bounds of reasonable response for them to conclude that summary dismissal was the appropriate sanction."

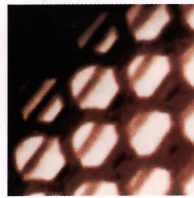
LONDON

Westfield London, a new shopping centre with five department stores and 14 cinema screens spanning nine postcodes, opened last Thursday.

The £4.3bn, 20-year project has seen an Australian development company channel £170m into major transport improvements in the Shepherd's Bush area, vital if the new mall is to succeed in persuading the target 60% of visitors to use public transport to reach the area.

Facilities for Underground and National Rail have been improved, while a new bus station - White City bus station - is due to open in November, close to the new Wood Lane

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Tube station and 70 metres from Westfield London. Heat pumps and solar panels reduce reliance on unsustainable fuels and contribute to the overall energy efficiency of the bus station. Bus routes 31, 49, 207, 237, 260, 607 and C1 will run from their current terminus at Shepherd's Bush via the Westfield Interchange and on to terminate at the White City bus station. Route 148 will run to the bus station via Wood Lane. Shepherd's Bush also continues to be served by buses 72, 94, 95, 220, 272, 283, 295 and N207, to bus stops within a short walk of Westfield London.

SOUTH EAST

East Dorset District Council is looking at extending its concessionary fares window. The Council has been operating the post-9.30am rule since the plans came into effect in April, but now it is looking to extend it to all the time, after running into difficulties.

A report to be considered by councillors outlines how people living in rural areas in particular have found it difficult to find a convenient bus to travel on after 9.30am. It also says that operators have reported the difficulties faced by staff in explaining the rules to passengers and that there is a tendency for passenger numbers to surge after the free period begins.

The watershed has also been unpopular with the public who have pressed for all-day travel for simplicity and convenience.

The report says the council can afford the upgrade because costs for the scheme for this year were overestimated at £712,050, when in fact they totalled £676,058.

Reading Buses has explained the reason behind their annual fares revision which came into effect recently.

Chief executive officer James Freeman said: "By taking decisive action now we hope we can stave off a further fares rise for another 12 months.

"We are able to keep the November annual rise to a minimum due to the increased growth in passenger numbers on our urban network.



Stephensons of Essex, one of the major independent bus operators, is to hold a "bus running day" with a difference. Following the success of last year's event, Stephensons will again be running special services in Southend and surrounding towns on January 1, 2009 when no services would otherwise be operating.

As well as using buses from their own fleet, Stephensons are inviting other

operators with "heritage" and interesting buses, particularly half cab double deckers, to join in the running day. Stephensons' director Lyn Watson explained: "Most running days are aimed squarely at the enthusiast market. We want to do something slightly different, by trying to provide a comprehensive network of services for the locals, but at the same time appealing to enthusiasts. We'd

like to hear from operators who are interested in joining us."

Operators interested in joining in the January 1 operations should contact Stephensons' planning manager Richard Delahoy for more details at richard@signal-training.com or phone 0845 2600136.

Pictured is an ex-London Routemaster operated by Talisman Logistics at last January's event.

"The November change is our annual revision to deal with the increased costs of staffing, insurance and materials as well as the ongoing effects of much higher fuel costs than a year ago.

"Although some of these cost increases can be mitigated by making savings, a fares revision is unavoidable. The current economic circumstances of rising inflation and the credit crunch have both led to increased costs."

He pointed out that the company's fuel bill will go up from £3.5 million last year to an estimated £5 million in the next 12 months.

He explained it was because of the way fuel was bought - often as much as 18 months in advance. Reading Buses pre-ordered the coming year's fuel - October 2008-September 2009 - back in July when oil prices peaked.

"The cost to us can continue to

rise whilst at the same time the price at the pumps for motorists is dropping. Our price is agreed up to 18 months in advance whereas pump prices are subject to market forces in a different way," Mr. Freeman explained.

"As an interim measure a modest fares increase was introduced in July and this is now the anniversary of our October 2007 increase. This increase averages 6% across our fares.

"The most popular ticket sold on the bus is the one day Busabout, which has been held at £3 for the past two years. This will increase to £3.20 which is still good value for a day's unlimited travel around Reading.

"Our Child Busabout, however, will reduce by 10p to £1.90.

"Whilst we are always reluctant to change fares - no-one wants a rise at any time - we ask our loyal customers to understand the difficulties we face," he added.

Diary

■ **November 4-6: Euro Bus Expo.** Birmingham NEC. 0870 4294588. www.eurobusexpo.com.

■ **November 5-6: Keeping Buses Moving Conference.** Birmingham NEC. 0207 257 2521. www.cpt-uk.org.

■ **November 10-13: World Travel Market.** London ExCeL. 0870 7333986. www.wtmlondon.com

■ **November 18: UK Bus Awards Ceremony.** Battersea Evolution, London. 0870 900 1450. info@ukbusawards.co.uk. www.ukbusawards.co.uk.

■ **November 20: Association of Trainers Meeting.** Huddersfield. 01474 834064. brian@driverpc.uk.com

■ **November 21-22: Coach & Bus Show.** RDS Simmonscourt Pavillion, Dublin, Ireland. www.ctc.ie.

■ **November 25: SMMT Annual Dinner.** Hilton Hotel, Park Lane, London. 020 72357000. Details annualdinner@smmt.co.uk

■ **January 29, 2009 CPT Annual Dinner.** Hilton Hotel, Park Lane, London. 0207 240 3131. clarek@cpt-uk.org

■ **March 10-12, 2009 Cleaning Show.** Birmingham NEC. 01895 454438. www.cleaningshow.co.uk

■ **March 26-29, 2009 Best of Britain & Ireland.** London ExCeL. 020 7654 0600. www.britainandirelandevent.co.uk

■ **April 18-19, 2009 55th UK Coach Rally.** Brighton. 01753 631170. www.coachdisplays.co.uk

■ **June 8-11, 2009 UITP Mobility & City Transport Exhibition.** Vienna, Austria. 0032 26736100. www.uitp.org

■ **October 7-8, 2009 Coach & Bus Live.** Birmingham NEC. 01926 834790. www.coachandbuslive.com

■ **October 16-21, 2009 Busworld Kortrijk.** Kortrijk, Belgium. 0032 51 22 6060. www.busworld.org



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Insurance: to sell or not to sell?

New rules on selling travel insurance will affect many tour operators. CBW catches up with industry specialists Infinity Insurance to look at what operators' options are

In August 2006 the Treasury announced a review of travel insurance sold alongside a holiday or other related travel (Connected Travel Insurance (CTI)).

Depending on your business model this new regulation will mean different things. If you are currently not FSA regulated you will have to do one of four things: Become authorised by the FSA; be an appointed representative (AR) of an authorised firm; become an introducer appointed representative of an authorised firm; or, finally, be an unregulated introducer or no longer offer CTI.

Firms wishing to be authorised in their own right will deal directly with the FSA. The majority of CTI companies are not expected to choose this route due to cost and complexity.

As an alternative to being directly authorised by the FSA, firms may wish to become appointed representatives (AR) or introducer appointed representatives (IAR) of an approved insurer or intermediary.

An IAR is similar to being of limited AR status and is exempt from the direct FSA regulation. However, being an IAR you are considerably more limited in the activities you can carry out. An IAR can only:

- Effect introductions
- Distribute non real time financial promotions

As with being an AR, the IAR must have a principle, and the principle will be responsible for the regulation of its IAR. Becoming an IAR may suit you if you plan not to advise on or administer CTI

Firms who become authorised by the FSA to carry on CTI mediation, for example those selling travel insurance as part of a connected sale, are unlikely to need to change their authorisation unless they wish to carry out a new regulated activity (such as advising or arranging unconnected sales if they are not currently doing this).

CTI firms that apply for authorisation for the first time will need to submit an application form and pay a non-refundable application fee.

Under an interim FSA authorisation regime provided by the Treasury, CTI firms applying directly to the FSA by or on November 15 will be allowed to carry on CTI after the new regime comes into force until they make a decision about their application on December 31, 2009 at the latest. All other firms selling travel insurance will need to be either an AR or an IAR by this date.

Infinity Insurance can help you in a number of ways:

- by supporting your application to become FSA approved
- by offering you the opportunity to become an AR
- by offering you the opportunity to become an IAR

Darryl Helliwell, CEO of Infinity Insurance, told *CBW*: "For many coach operators the IAR route may well be the most practical. It does mean that the operator will lose some control over the insurance sale as all he will be able to do is give the client either the phone number or web address of his supplier and the client will have to do the rest.

"There is, however, a benefit to the client dealing with the broker directly and that is that the client will be asked about their medical conditions at the point of sale and can be medically screened at the same time. Our online system has medical screening inbuilt so the client can screen themselves or, if they call in, they will be screened as part of the sale process. At the present time the number of coach travellers actually calling the screening line is fairly small, probably only around 20% of those who need to call, with the consequence that some get their claims declined through non-declaration.

"Our insurers, Union Reiseversicherung AG, also provide travel insurance to several other brokers within the coach market."

■ Contact Infinity Insurance by emailing broking@infinityinsurance.co.uk or by phone on 0845 1309309.

DEALS OF THE WEEK

■ Attractions based in the Pool of London have teamed up to provide a new venture for groups with children to entertain. The free London Explore Kit encourages children to explore HMS Belfast, All Hallows Church, Tower of London and Tower Bridge using quizzes, drawings, maps and play sheets to make a visit more lively and fun. Educational as well as entertaining, kids will learn about the history of the venues, looking at code-breaking, monarchs and the diary of Samuel Pepys. The kits are available for download on each of the participating attractions' websites. See www.hrp.org.

Explore London for free



www.toweroflondon.org.uk, www.allhallowsbythetower.org.uk, hmsbelfast.iwm.org.uk and www.towerbridge.org.uk.

■ The octagon in Bolton has announced its winter group bookings policies, with reserve now, pay later available on most performances. Until February 2009, all matinees cost just £8.50 per ticket for groups of ten or more, with one free ticket for the booking organiser. For groups between ten and 20, all seats are available at £12.50, £11.50 for 21-50 people and groups of over 51 pay just £10.50. School groups get one free teacher's ticket with every 15 students. Evening shows (in side stalls and gallery) cosy £9.50, non-school matinees (side stalls and gallery) cost £8.50 and school matinees (all seats) cost just £8.50. Opened in November 1967 as a Bolton Council initiative, with financial support from local businesses, Bolton's Octagon Theatre attracts over 135,000 people each year. To discuss your group booking requirements, contact the Octagon Theatre ticket office on 01204 520661.

New Homecoming Passes on sale soon

Three of Scotland's biggest heritage organisations have got together to create a single ticket giving access to more than 135 great attractions.

The Homecoming Pass is primarily designed for the trade and is the first ever joint initiative of its kind by Historic Scotland, The National Trust for Scotland and the Historic Houses Association. Passes will cover an amazing range of top-name attractions such as Edinburgh Castle, Scone Palace and Culzean Castle.

From Bannockburn to Blair Castle, it will give visitors a full seven days to enjoy any of the castles, mansions, gardens,



Edinburgh Castle is in the Pass

abbeys, churches, battlefields and museums taking part.

The pass has been designed as part of the organisations' contribution to Homecoming Scotland 2009, billed as the biggest-ever celebration

HOLIDAY POUND

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Switzerland (Franc)	1.79
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Belgium	104.22
Spain	104.14
Portugal	104.06
Hungary	102.76
Austria	102.15
Luxembourg	91.18
Switzerland	90.99

of Scottish culture and heritage.

Graeme Bowie, Historic Scotland sales manager, said: "The Homecoming Pass is the first initiative of its kind by our three organisations and we believe it will be warmly welcomed by the trade.

We hope that this package will provide operators with exciting opportunities to create new and inspiring itineraries that will appeal to the widest possible audience."

Homecoming passes will go on sale from December and are valid from April to September 2009. Prices are £35 for adults, £17.50 children, £26 concessions and £85 for a family (two adults, two children). Call 0131 668 8664 to order.



The Tanfield Railway has unveiled the latest addition to its collection of historic rolling stock in the shape of a North Eastern Railway carriage, built at York in 1878. The new carriage, number 256, has been restored to its as-withdrawn condition, with ornate lining. Even more remarkable is that the latter has been undertaken by volunteer David Watchman, only 20.

Number 256 joins a growing collection of fascinating wooden-bodied carriages and historic steam locomotives, operating along the world's oldest existing railway. The journey along the three-mile line lasts around an hour.

Chris Walker, director told CBW: "We've become a popular destination for coach groups. In addition to a train ride, we can also offer guided tours of our historic site, which includes Europe's oldest working engine shed, together with a range of refreshments served in our period tea room." Located in Gateshead, nearby attractions include Beamish and the Metro Centre.

For further information, visit www.tanfield-railway.co.uk. Call 0191 3887545 or e-mail info@tanfield-railway.co.uk.

2009 sees exclusive group tours of Buckingham Palace gardens

For the first time ever, guided tours of the garden at Buckingham Palace will be available to the general public next year. Described as 'a walled oasis in the middle of London', the 16-hectare garden is the largest private garden in the capital and boasts more than 350 types of wild flower and over 150 mature trees.

For over 200 years it has been used by the Royal Family for official entertaining and celebratory events and was the venue for the Golden Jubilee concerts in 2002 and the Children's Party at the Palace in 2006 to mark Her Majesty's 80th birthday. Every summer it is the setting for The Queen's Garden Parties.

The tours are available to pre-booked groups of 15 to 25 people on selected dates in April, May and June. An introductory talk will reveal the history of the garden, from its days as a mulberry plantation in the reign of James I and its transformation during the conversion of Buckingham House into Buckingham Palace in the 1820s, to the work carried out by today's team of gardeners.

Visitors will be guided along



New Palace garden tour

the 1,500-metre path around the garden and will see the famous Herbaceous Border, the wisteria-clad summerhouse and the Rose Garden. Among the highlights of the garden are the three-acre lake, the enormous Waterloo Vase and the Palace tennis court.

Guided tours of Buckingham Palace garden are available for pre-booked groups of 15-25 people, priced £20 for adults and £10 for under 17s (price includes an introductory talk, garden tour and refreshments). Call 0207 7667333.

Briefly

On Thursday, December 4 from 5.30pm to 8pm shoppers will have the chance to pick up some gifts and enjoy free refreshments in the atmosphere of Stirling Castle. At the same time they can visit the beautiful Chapel Royal and admire the latest of the Stirling Tapestries. Gillian MacDonald, Stirling Castle manager, said: "Christmas shopping should be fun and a bit special, and we hope people will enjoy the chance to browse and buy while enjoying a complimentary drink."

Brainiac, the TV show that pokes fun at science, will take to the stage in spring 2009. Throughout February and March, the stage show will visit venues up and down the country. Brainiac Live visits venues in London, Birmingham, Nottingham, Bournemouth, Cheltenham, Plymouth and Manchester among many others. Tickets cost £18.50 for adults and £16.50 for under-16s. Check with individual venues for details of group discounts. Log onto www.brainiaclive.co.uk for full details.

A stage version of smash-hit movie *Sister Act* has been announced as the show to take over at the London Palladium next May. The Sound of Music is currently playing at the Palladium, before it comes to the end of its run at the end of February 2009. Call 0870 0606644 or log onto www.london-palladium.co.uk.

English Heritage's Bolsover Castle in Derbyshire has been rewarded for 'helping make the East Midlands attractive to visitors' at the 2008 East Midlands Tourism Enjoy England Excellence Awards. The castle's visitor operations team accepted a Silver award in the 'Best large visitor attraction' category at a ceremony held at the East Midlands Conference Centre earlier this month. The Castle came a close second to Kedleston Hall who took the Gold award.

Missing manager leads to loss

Having no contact with his transport manager lost John Moses his O licence

Two-vehicle independent operator Easy Travel of Staffordshire has had its operator licence revoked immediately, and its owner John Moses disqualified for three months. In a written decision after a public inquiry at the end of September, deputy traffic commissioner (DTC) Miles Dorrington said: "In this case Mr Moses was only honest after he was caught by VOSA and he admitted that had he not been caught he would have carried on deliberately operating more vehicles than he was authorised to operate, that is to say he would have carried on being dishonest."

John Moses trading as Easy Travel of Abbey Hulton, Stoke on Trent, faced a public inquiry in Birmingham on September 30, to consider disciplinary and regulatory action following an adverse maintenance and operator licence compliance report.

In preliminary remarks, Mr Dorrington said that his clerk had tried to track down the nominated transport manager David Cotton as the calling in letter sent by recorded delivery to his last known address had been returned. "After receiving confirmation that the telephone number on Mr Cotton's file was no longer in use I made inquiry as to his whereabouts with Mr Moses, who told me that the last time he had any contact with Mr Cotton was in December 2007. He said that he understood Mr Cotton had moved but had neither his new address, nor a new contact telephone number for him." The public inquiry proceeded in Mr Cotton's absence as all reasonable efforts to locate him had been exhausted.

VOSA vehicle Examiner Keith Algrante gave evidence following an unannounced visit on 19 February 2008. His statement highlighted a number of significant issues, namely:

A Three of the four vehicles examined on 19 February

2008 received a prohibition including one that was 'S' marked.

B Vehicles were being operated that were not recorded on the operating licence.

C More vehicles were being operated than were authorised to be operated.

D A number of preventative maintenance inspection sheets had not being properly completed.

E An MOT first time pass rate of only 52% when the national average at the time was 70%.

F Admissions by Mr Moses, when he was interviewed under caution, that he hardly ever saw his transport manager, and that he accepted he was using more vehicles than he was authorised to use.

Under cross examination by Mr Marsh on behalf of the operator, Mr Algrante stated that when he arrived at the operator's premises on 19 February 2008 Mr Moses had told him that all of his vehicles were out and being used for school runs. He also confirmed that many maintenance related records were missing at the time of his visit and that the driver defect reporting system "looked to be lip service, the drivers were just ticking the boxes".

Mr Dorrington asked the vehicle examiner what confidence he had in the transport manager demonstrating maintenance compliance to which he answered "absolutely none".

John Moses stated that over the last two years he had gradually built up the size of his fleet from two vehicles to a maximum of five vehicles from September 2007. He admitted to using more than two vehicles for several months, that he understood he was not allowed to do that, and that he had not applied to increase the authorisation on his operating licence as he could



Maintenance was a key failure

KEY POINTS

- An unannounced visit from vehicle examiner Mr Algrante found maintenance failures
- It was also discovered the operator was running more vehicles than his licence allowed
- Deputy TC Dorrington had no hesitation in banning Mr Moses for three months

not raise the necessary money at the time. When asked by his representative when he stopped using more than two vehicles Mr Moses replied "when VOSA came".

Mr Moses also admitted that where VOSA had found that periodic maintenance inspection sheets were missing, it was because the vehicle in question had not been inspected. He stated that after Mr Cotton stopped coming to his premises in December 2007, he thought that he was able to carry on with Mr Cotton as his transport manager just by using his name. He said that he now knew that he needed a new transport manager, but no one with a valid certificate of professional competence (CPC) was available to take on that role.

Mr Moses gave assurances that he was now compliant, with a proper driver defect reporting system in place and that all

maintenance related documents were being properly filled in and defects that had been identified were marked to show they had been rectified.

Vehicle Examiner Keith Algrante was recalled to give evidence on a file of maintenance inspection sheets presented by Mr Moses at the start of the public inquiry, which he had been asked to consider, as best he could, in the time available. Giving what he described as a random snapshot, Mr Algrante mentioned periodic maintenance inspection sheets in April, June, July, August and September 2008 where the defects identified had not been signed off and/or the sheet was not certified to show the vehicle was roadworthy - and/or no corresponding defect was recorded on the driver defect reporting sheet when the defect should have been obvious to the driver. An example of this was a periodic maintenance inspection sheet dated 11 July 2008 which he stated was not properly signed off and that one of the defects identified on it, a tyre worn below the legal tread limit, was not recorded on the corresponding driver defect reporting sheet for that day.

He was asked by the DTC, "As you see the operator today what confidence do you have with this operator being compliant?" Mr Algrante replied "None".

Answering these criticisms, Mr Moses stated that some of the repairs were being completed by an additional engineer, (other than his maintenance provider), and it was for that reason that his maintenance provider was not prepared to sign off the preventative maintenance inspection forms to certify that the vehicle was roadworthy, and why some of the defects identified were not signed off to show they had been rectified.

In coming to his findings, the deputy traffic commissioner said that he had to determine whether

the activities revealed by the evidence demonstrated behaviour by the operator which would lead him to conclude that the operator has lost his good repute.

"I accept the evidence given by the vehicle examiner in its entirety and I also accept the admissions given by Mr Moses, both when he was interviewed and when questioned at the public inquiry. As a result I make the following findings:

"That Mr Moses deliberately operated four vehicles for a period of five months when he was only authorised to operate two vehicles.

"That Mr Moses would have carried on operating more vehicles than he was authorised to operate if VOSA had not visited him on 19 February 2008.

"That Mr Moses did not have a proper driver defect reporting system as at the date of the Public Inquiry as evidenced by the documents inspected by vehicle examiner Algrante and the evidence he gave when he was recalled as a witness.

"That Mr Moses still did not keep proper periodic maintenance inspection records as evidenced by the documents inspected by Vehicle Examiner Algrante and the evidence he gave when he was recalled as a witness.

"That Mr Moses has failed to present vehicles for their scheduled periodic maintenance inspections.

"That the MOT first time pass rate is significantly below the national average.

"That Mr Moses operated his fleet of vehicles for nine months without a transport manager.

"That Mr Moses knew, or should have known, that he needed a transport manager.

"That a number of material changes have not been notified to the Traffic Commissioner; an increase in the size of the fleet of vehicles, the loss of the transport manager and the changes to the identity of the vehicles being used by Mr Moses."

Mr Dorrington said that he did not accept the evidence given by Mr Moses that his vehicles are being properly maintained by a second engineer as no evidence

was presented to show that was the case and, in any event, the preventative maintenance inspection sheets completed by the stated maintenance provider were not being signed off to show that the vehicles were roadworthy or that certain defects had been rectified.

"In my view the whole purpose of keeping written maintenance records is to show that defects are being identified, repaired (with the previously identified defects being shown as rectified)

**MR MOSES
THOUGHT HE
COULD CARRY
ON BY USING
HIS TRANSPORT
MANAGER'S
NAME**

and that vehicles are routinely inspected by a competent mechanic who certifies in writing that the vehicle is roadworthy before it is used again on a public road.

"The whole operator licensing system relies on trust between the traffic commissioners and the operators to whom an operating licence is granted. That system of trust only works if operators are honest all of the time - an ongoing obligation that requires operators to voluntarily and promptly notify their traffic commissioner of any material change of circumstances that may affect their fitness to hold an operating licence. In this case Mr Moses was only honest after he was caught by VOSA and he admitted in evidence that had he not been caught he would have carried on deliberately operating more vehicles than he was authorised to operate, that is to say he would have carried on being dishonest.

"Accordingly, when assessing Mr Moses' good repute I have asked myself the question: 'is the conduct such that the operator ought to be put out of business?' In the circumstances I consider it both proportionate

and appropriate to answer that question in the affirmative. I therefore determine that this operator has lost his good repute and as a result I must revoke the operator licence. Accordingly, in addition to revoking the operating licence, in my view it is entirely proportionate to disqualify this operator from holding or obtaining an operator's licence for a period of three months, with immediate effect.

"I add that had Mr Moses not been so open at the Public Inquiry I would have given consideration to a much longer period of disqualification. In that respect I have given Mr Moses some credit for his honesty when determining the length of disqualification, notwithstanding that I expect all operators to be honest all of the time.

"I turn now to Mr Cotton as transport manager. I consider that his conduct in allowing more vehicles to be operated than

were authorised on the operator licence until December 2007, when he appears to have left this transport operation, to be a significant and ongoing failure in his duty as nominated transport manager. I also consider his failure to properly check that the maintenance records for the vehicles were being properly completed, and his failure to inform the Traffic Area Office that he had left the employment of Mr Moses, or to give his new contact details, to be breaches of duty.

"Cumulatively Mr Cotton's conduct leads me to conclude that he is no longer of good repute. I see no evidence before the end of December 2007 that shows Mr Cotton demonstrated any degree of continuous or effective responsibility for the management of the transport operation. The loss of his good repute is therefore a proportionate order to make in the circumstances of this case."

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Business rates revaluation – prepare to appeal

It looks like the majority of business rates will rise following April 2008's assessment. Philippa Aldrich reports.

In the midst of the credit crunch and the turbulence of the economic markets, many commercial tenants are struggling to stay afloat. Whilst survival in the 'here and now' is undoubtedly top priority for many UK businesses, it is essential that commercial occupiers also keep one eye on the cost of the future.

Property costs are often the main expense for businesses. On top of rents and service charges, occupiers have to pay what are, essentially, occupier taxes. Known as business rates, compulsory contributions to local authority services are generally in the region of 40% of yearly rent.

Business rates are calculated by multiplying the 'rateable value' of each non-domestic property by a multiplier set yearly by the Government in response to inflation. Broadly, the rateable value of premises reflects the annual rent the property could expect to attract on the open market at a specific date. The rateable value is reassessed every 5 years, and business rates are altered accordingly, in order to track changes in the property market.

In April this year the rateable value of all of the UK's 1.8 million commercial buildings was re-assessed by the Valuation Office Agency (an agency of the Inland Revenue). In April 2010 this revaluation will be implemented. Although values will not be confirmed until September 2009, based on the open market value of commercial property in April 2008 and the general trend of rising rents since the last revaluation in 2003, it is highly likely that for the majority of occupiers business rates will rise.

Research has shown that before any appeals, average increases for retailers could be 15% plus. Supermarkets should expect a 20% rise and West End offices a crippling 40% increase in their business rates. Although it is likely that increases will be implemented via a five year transitional arrangement,

every ratepayer will pay their true rates liability in the fifth year at least, and most will pay it well before.

When general market trends show rents are rising, payment of rates based on the rental values from at least two years previously seems fairly advantageous to occupiers. But unfortunately, rents are no longer rising. In fact, between now and 2010 rents are predicted to fall.

The current economic slowdown and the negative business performance of many companies, particularly in the retail sector, mean occupiers are hesitant to take on new leases. Developers and landlords are being forced to reduce their rents for retail and office spaces alike.

The new requirement for buildings

**OCCUPIERS HAVE
TO PAY WHAT
ARE, ESSENTIALLY,
OCCUPIER TAXES
– KNOWN AS
BUSINESS RATES**

to have Energy Performance Certificates and the recent focus upon the environment will also inevitably have an impact. It is expected that buildings with high energy efficiency ratings will become more attractive to occupiers and rents of less efficient buildings will be driven down.

On top of all of this, legislation abolishing empty property rates relief came into force on April 1 this year. Occupiers with vacant retail or office premises must now pay full business rates on spaces which are empty for more than three months. Previously, after three months only 50% rates were payable. Warehouses and factories will benefit from 100% relief for only six months before again facing full

business rates. Industrial buildings used to enjoy 100% relief from business rates no matter how long the space stood empty.

During the economic boom, this sort of encouragement to re-use, sublet or redevelop underutilised properties would arguably have been positive. Through brownfield regeneration, greenfield development could be limited and lower rents would be agreed to avoid high taxes becoming due on empty buildings.

However, this only works in a booming economy. Clearly, not all landlords are sitting on empty properties because they are unwilling to market the buildings to new tenants or modernise them in order to do so. Some properties are simply harder to let, perhaps due to their age, situation or lack of demand. This is especially true when uncertainty is looming on the economic horizon. In fact, even with the threat of high empty business rates, since the abolition of relief was announced in March 2007, there has been a 21% rise in the number of vacant commercial properties. In spite of the Government's attempts to encourage development and regeneration, energy efficient improvements and speculative development plans have widely been put on hold. In light of full taxation, landlords are not willing to obtain vacant possession to carry out such works and are obviously keen to fill existing properties before building more.

Whilst it is possible that rents could rise because the cost of rates on empty buildings are after all passed onto tenants, overall, rents are likely to fall. Many businesses are unable to bear the increased costs burden that abolition of the relief has induced. Older properties which cannot be filled, even at a reduced rent, may face demolition as landlords seek to avoid the rates liability.

It is yet to be seen whether the

A large number of firms won't see 2010. Those that do may need to be ready to fight high business rates



Government will take lower rents into account when calculating the new 2010 business rates. If not, occupiers will face inflated rates rises in 2010 at a time when rents have fallen below April 2008 levels. Some have speculated that the coincidence of the implementation on the same day of the new empty rates legislation and the review of rateable values is Government manipulation. Already set to benefit hugely from increased taxes payable on empty buildings (in the region of £1.4bn), the Government can administer a double whammy by raising business rates too.

And occupiers will face a further blow from April 2010 when local authorities will be allowed to levy a business rate supplement of 2p in the £1.

So what can occupiers do? In September 2009 the Valuation Office Agency will publish the new rateable values on its website. Before it comes into effect, occupiers will have six months to check that the valuation of their property is based on factually correct information. The rateable value should reflect the net effective rent of a property and take into account any

FOR THE BEST CHANCE OF PAYING FAIR RATES, OCCUPIERS SHOULD LOOK AT LOCAL RENTAL INCENTIVES

incentives such as rent free periods or cash contributions from landlords. It is at this point that occupiers may be able to avoid arbitrary tax by querying or appealing against the rateable value of their property. Any changes to the neighbourhood or the property which may have affected the value of the premises can be reported; the Valuation Office Agency will then investigate further.

Whilst there has so far been no blanket reduction in business rates to reflect the reduction in rents due to the uncertain economy or the abolition of empty rates relief, it may still be possible to contend, on a case-by-case basis, that the changes to the empty rate relief legislation impact on a

property's rental value. For example, the rateable value of a property could be reduced if it came onto the rental market because of the change in the empty rates legislation.

If the outcome of any further investigation is still unsatisfactory, an occupier can formally propose to alter their property's rating. A three month period will then ensue during which most cases are likely to be settled by agreement. However, if no agreement is forthcoming, the case will be automatically referred to the local valuation tribunal where the appeal will be heard. Three weeks before the hearing, an appellant will be informed of the rents of similar properties that may be used by the valuation office to justify their valuation. An agreement can still be reached at any time. If a case gets to the hearing stage, the appellant does not have to attend. They can state their case in writing. However, attendance may be wise, just in case any further information is required.

Business rates must continue to be paid whilst the appeal process is underway and until a decision has been reached. If an appellant is suffering particular hardship there is a chance that the process can be sped up. Ultimately, if a case is successful, the relevant council will refund any overpayment, with interest. The tribunal is free. Occupiers must however bear in mind that a reduction in rateable value, unfortunately does not always mean a reduction in business rates.

In order to stand the best chance of paying fair and accurate business rates in the future, it is essential that occupiers start gathering information on the impact of the empty rate legislation and collate records of rental incentives being given locally. It is worth also considering appointing a rating agent who can value the property, identify grounds for a rates reduction, complete the proposal and act as a point of contact with the local valuation office. Any rating agent should have detailed local knowledge of procedures and any local conditions which may affect values.

Unless the Government is prepared to do a U-turn and reinstate empty property rate relief, it is possible that some businesses won't even see 2010. However, those that do, need not be punished further through extortionate rates they can ill afford. Advice to occupiers: prepare to appeal.

Philippa Aldrich is a partner and **Claire Macdonald** is a trainee solicitor in the Real Estate Group of Shadbolt LLP.

Q&A H&S at home, on the road and at work

The Lloyd Morgan Group on your legal obligations

Q As part of a refurbishment project, new flooring is to be installed throughout the premises, including walking spaces. As the health and safety manager, I have been asked to assess what type of flooring should be selected from the health and safety viewpoint. What factors should I consider?

A The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 require that "every floor in a workplace and the surface of every traffic route in a workplace shall be of a construction such that the floor or surface of the traffic route is suitable for the purpose for which it is used".

As a refurbishment project is taking place, this is a good opportunity to look at the type of flooring required to eliminate or reduce any hazards, such as slipping and tripping. Timing is important and flooring selection needs to be considered at the planning stage.

CIRIA publication C652: Safer surfaces to walk on - Reducing the risk of slipping contains useful guidance on the approach to take in this matter. (This document is available from www.hsebooks.com).

The publication emphasises the need to take an inclusive, holistic approach and in particular recommends the use of the 'Slip Potential Model'. This provides the framework for the specified "to give due consideration to all the common factors that may influence the selection, refurbishment, or maintenance of a safe walking surface".

It should be noted that this is not the same as the HSE Slip Assessment Tool, which is aimed at identifying generic levels of slip risks.

It is recommended that the model is used for a number of surface options. The model used a number of

criteria including floor surface material characteristics, contamination issues, cleaning regimes, environmental factors, human factors and footwear.

However, consideration should also be given to other factors, including:

■ **Cost:** floors with higher slip-resistant values (SRV's) may cost more

■ **Appearance:** smooth surfaces may look more pleasing, but may require increased cleaning to prevent slips as they have a lower SRV

■ **Wear/Durability:** harder surfaces will tend to last longer

■ **Maintenance and consequence of falls:** this could be a consideration particularly where there is a history of falls or civil claims

Having gone through the above process, a judgment will clearly have to be made employing the usual 'cost benefit' analysis as the most appropriate flooring.

Once a selection is made, it is essential to ensure that it is correctly specified and the maintenance regime is implemented.

Q What would happen if a member of staff was driving during their working day on our behalf, either in a company vehicle or their own, and was involved in a fatal traffic accident and we had to take steps to make checks on the validity of their licence.

A The Road Traffic Act states that not only is it an offence to drive a motor vehicle without a valid driving licence, but that is an offence to cause or permit someone to do so. Nearly one million current road users are on the brink of losing their licences. It is an employer's responsibility to carry out driving licence checks on all of its employees and indeed on anyone who drives one of its vehicles. Employers are at serious risk if their drivers are on the road without a valid driving licence or are driving company vehicles on a licence that does not reflect their licence eligibility.

Having checked with the police authority and reviewed the relevant legislation, the implications for your company if a fatal accident were involved would depend on the outcome of the police and fatal accident investigation. The potential

for a prosecution under the Road Traffic Act is possible.

You should review the following pieces of legislation

■ The Road Traffic Act

■ The Highway Code

■ The Motor Vehicles (Driving Licences) Regulations 1999

■ The Road Safety Act 2006, Section 8, Driving Records Access to Information.

IT IS YOUR DUTY
THAT PLACEMENT
EMPLOYEES ARE
HOUSED IN SAFE
AND SECURE
FACILITIES

Overseas Visitors

Q We have some employees from our foreign facility coming to the UK for a number of weeks and we have asked our UK employees if they have a spare room to accommodate these people while they are here, which we will pay for. What are the legal/safety implications of this? Is there anything that our UK employees need to do in order to meet requirements?

A It is your duty that placement employees are housed in facilities that are considered to be safe and secure as you would normally for official visitors or others staying in hotels of your choosing.

This does not mean that your UK employees need to have a set of risk assessments, etc for their home/domestic environment, but it does mean that your visitors should not be exposed to hazards over and above that which is normally found and considered to be standard in the average home. Your employees may need to inform their home insurers of the temporary paying visitors.

lloyd morgan group
SMOOTHING THE PATH TO COMPLIANCE

The Lloyd Morgan Group can be emailed on info@lloydmorgan.co.uk or phone 01543 670870.

Every care is taken in the preparation of these questions and answers. The information is correct at the time of going to press. However the answers can only address the general principles involved. It is suggested that professional advice must be sought on any specific query or problem your business has relating to any of the points raised.

A REFURBISHMENT
IS A GOOD
OPPORTUNITY TO
LOOK AT REDUCING
HAZARDS SUCH AS
TRIPS AND SLIPS



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David Cattermole, Director, Galloways Coach Tour Operator, United Kingdom

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Vintage days

I confess to a classic error in the form of an Asquith replica coach

“

There used to be a column in one of the posh Sunday papers titled “My Biggest Mistake”, and each week various leading figures would publicly beat their breasts over some past foolishness.

Well, knowing how enjoyable it is to read about other people’s cock-ups, may I present my own confessions, the greatest of which is that, when I was a coach operator, I bought an Asquith replica ‘vintage’ coach.

And yet, even now, if I re-live my thinking at the time, the logic of doing so was absolutely sound. So where did it all go wrong?

Regular readers of this page will have gathered that I used to run a fleet of small, up-scale vehicles catering primarily to the corporate market. From the time I first started as an owner-driver with one minibus, a large percentage of my work came from referrals and sub-contract work from the major operators. They tended to be a bit sniffy about small coaches – “We run full-size vehicles: we’re not interested in the small stuff – we’ll pass that work on to you,” they would declare.

By the time I’d built up a nice little fleet (and at one time my average vehicle age was 10 months) I think they’d all realised how much work they were letting me take off them, and not surprisingly, in the space of about 18 months eight established operators in my area acquired small coaches themselves.

Sincerely believing that getting into head-to-head slugging-match competition with other operators only results in no-one winning; I tried to think of a new angle that would allow me to offer something different from my rivals. And then, at a trade show, I saw what I was convinced would be the answer – the Asquith.

The company had been founded by a manufacturer of reproduction furniture who happened to have a vintage van that he used for local deliveries. Noticing how often customers asked if their delivery could be made in the “old van” and with a downturn in the furniture business, he used his

team of skilled craftsmen to build new ‘vintage’ delivery vans. These proved very popular with florists, antique dealers, and up-market department stores, as they were real head-turners and proved a valuable marketing tool as well as fulfilling the delivery function. Then a major hotel asked for a passenger version as a courtesy bus, and they were in the PCV market.

As the basic running gear was the same make as I already operated in my fleet there would be no problem with spares or maintenance, and Asquith modified their build to match the configuration of my other vehicles. It was great fun organising the ‘extras’, like wheels! (I wanted the spoked carriage wheels, not the chassis’ standard type) and having the beautiful upholstery made.

“**EVERYONE WAS IMPRESSED, BUT WHEN IT CAME TO BOOKING, THE SILENCE WAS DEAFENING**”

A unique feature of the Asquith was the all-round sign boarding: a corporate hirer could have a set of boards sign-written with its own name and message, and with these in place all round the top of the vehicle, it would be instantly customised as ‘their’ courtesy coach. I was introduced to an operator in Yorkshire who already ran two of these vehicles, and made a nice living out of the conferences and exhibitions at Harrogate.

So with the newly opened International Conference Centre in Birmingham on my doorstep, being already well established at the NEC, and with local tourist boards and event organisers as existing customers, I thought I’d be quid’s in.

As expected, everyone was highly impressed with the Asquith when I demonstrated it to them. But when it came to booking it, the silence was deafening. I even resorted to putting my own boards on it with the slogan “Don’t just admire it – hire it!”, and still nothing.



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If you want to let off some steam, just tap away at the keyboard and send your rant (or carefully-reasoned views) to cbwinbox@rouncymedia.co.uk, or fax 0845 280 2927. Make ‘Open Platform’ the subject line. Alternatively, send your missive to: CBW, 3 The Office Village, Cygnet Park, Forder Way, Hampton, Peterborough PE7 8GX

When my regular tour operator clients would ring up to make a booking, I’d ask them if they’d like the Asquith. “Oh no”, they’d say, “We’d rather have one of your ordinary ones.” When I asked why, they’d say, “Well it looks as if it might break down”, even when they knew it was brand new.

It was so frustrating, because if I ever did get a group to use it for a tour of Stratford on Avon or Warwick Castle, I never got a moment’s peace from the crowds it would attract whenever I parked up. If I’d charged a pound for every photograph that was taken of it, I’d be writing this in the Bahamas now, so I knew that it had massive pulling power – but hard as I tried, I couldn’t translate that into significant business.

A few companies invested in the signboards and used it at trade shows and I could see from the number of swivelling heads that it was bringing the hirer far more attention than static advertising, but they were a minority.

It’s only successful market was for weddings, and every Saturday would see me trying to tie white bows on the headlamps, but often I was reduced to using it on a school run – to the embarrassed horror of the students.

I eventually challenged the marketing director of the local tourist bureau: “Why won’t people hire it?” He squirmed a bit, and then confessed, “Well, speaking for myself, I’d feel a bit of a prat riding in it – people would be looking at you.”

Now have I got it wrong, but isn’t the function of a marketing person to create interest and make people look?

It was great fun to drive, and beautifully built – they’d had to ask the craftsman who made the real burr-walnut dashboards to introduce deliberate flaws, because they looked too artificial, and it had a klaxon that gave out a terrific “Waugh-waugh” noise. But still few would hire it!

Eventually the large operator who bought out my own company and inherited the Asquith sold it for a song to an Irish operator, and I’d like to think it’s still somewhere chugging round the lanes of Eire.

”

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Meet the Team

STAGECOACH NORTH EAST

Little & large

CBW's Gareth Evans visits two contrasting Stagecoach North East depots – large, modern Walkergate and its more mature, smaller sibling at South Shields

Since I joined Travel West Midlands (TWM) as a student, bus depots have become a place of interest for me – not for the vehicles, but for the people. Depots, or 'garages' as they're better known as in TWM land, always seem to harbour an interesting collection of characters. They're a community in themselves, containing experienced hands, with a plethora of tales from the past alongside new faces with fresh ideas and many miles of service to accumulate.

The inaugural 'Meet the Team' (or depot profile) featured in *CBW* 806 12 months ago and proved a great hit. Therefore I was delighted when the team at Stagecoach North East suggested I might like to visit a couple of their depots, namely Walkergate and South Shields. The modern lines of Walkergate, opened only last year and which benefits from cutting edge energy saving devices made an interesting contrast alongside South Shields, with its long, rich history and a proud workforce.

History

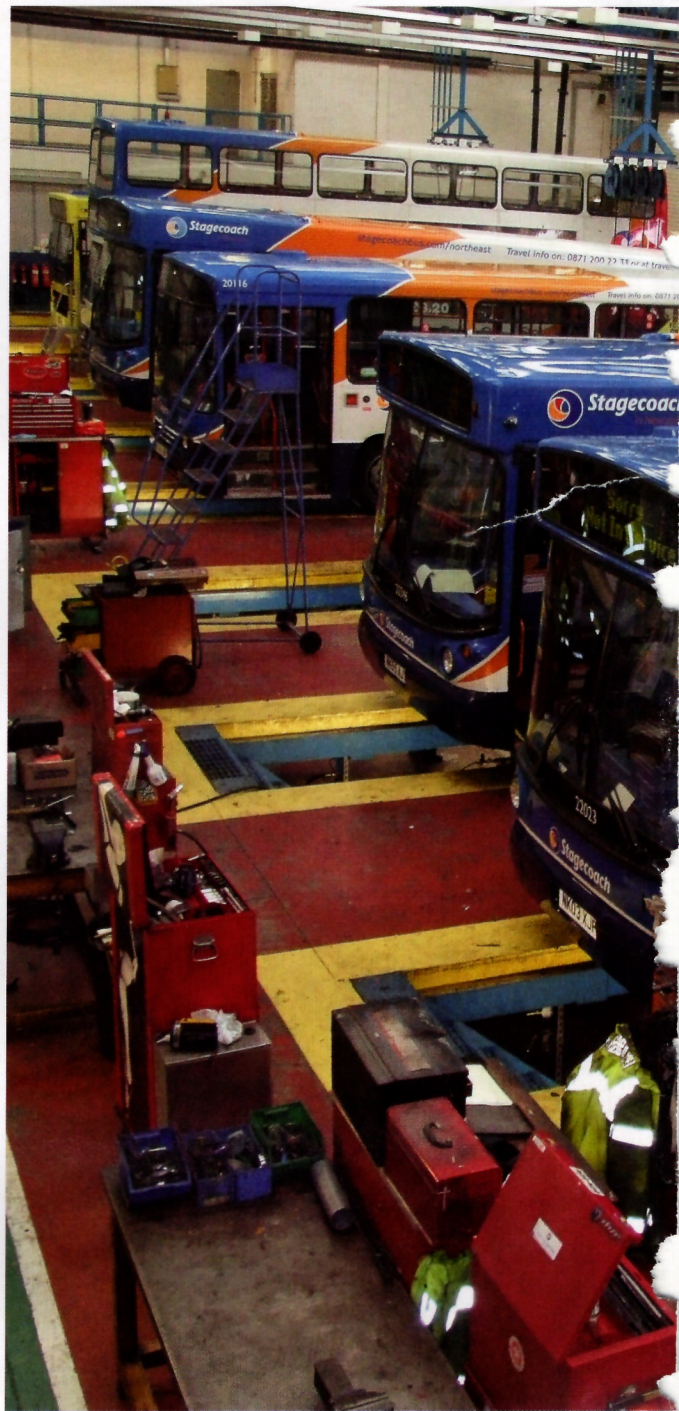
Previously known as Busways, the business that today forms Stagecoach North East began trading in 1986 under the ownership of the Tyne and

Wear PTA, formed to take over Tyne and Wear PTE's bus operations, as part of the requirements of the 1986 Transport Act regarding deregulation of bus services. Privatisation came in 1989 when Busways was sold to its employees and management, the balance of share being 51 and 49 percent respectively. With other large groups gaining a foothold in the area, Busways decided to seek a buyer and was acquired by Stagecoach in July 1994. The Busways Travel Services name now only exists as a legal entity of the Stagecoach North East bus division. The vehicles themselves are however liveried as Stagecoach in Newcastle/Sunderland/South Shields.

Walkergate depot

Walkergate depot is located to the east of Newcastle-upon-Tyne city centre. Opened in 2007, it replaced the former Byker depot, which was located slightly nearer the city centre along Shields Road, and which has since been redeveloped as a retail park.

The new Walkergate was purpose built to act as a model for Stagecoach across the UK and prides itself on being the most innovative depot within the group in terms of equipment and facilities, more of which later.



Above: Part of the workshop at Walkergate.
Left: John Conroy, MD.
Right: The engineering management team – Bob Bootiman, John Lee and Colin Garcher.



With 350 buses, it is the firm's largest in the region and serves a compact area that includes Newcastle city centre, Heaton and out towards Gateshead.

Vehicles include ADL Enviro 400s, Enviro 200s, Alexander PS-bodied Volvo B10Ms, Alexander E300-bodied MANs, Alexander-bodied Volvo Olympians, together with a number of Dennis Darts. Around 70 percent of the fleet is low floor.

Undoubtedly the depot's highest profile route is Quaylink, which connects the heart of the city centre to the quay side and Gateshead using dedicated hybrid-electric buses manufactured by Designline of New Zealand.



A small team of half a dozen drivers are also dedicated to Megabus, which has its own compact office.

Undoubtedly the flagship service is route 1, which links the outskirts of Newcastle with the city centre, linking the campuses of both universities.

The management team at Walkergate is headed up by operations manager David Wakefield, Tommy Blacker as assistant operations manager and Bob Bootiman as engineering manager.

Tommy Blacker has spent his career in public transport. "I was a driver for 17 years, before becoming supervisory staff for five years and now this. I've worked at all the depots across Stagecoach North East, except South Shields. I've been in my current role for



around two months now. I'm a born and bred Newcastle lad!" he laughed.

"I worked at the old Byker depot as an inspector. Walkergate superseded Byker. I enjoy it here. I'd be lying if I said I didn't enjoy working within the bus industry."

Engineering manager Bob Bootiman was enthusiastic about embracing the company's environmental programme. "We've installed three variable compressors. A voltage optimiser will be put in too - it's all to do with maximising efficiency."

As discussed earlier, the initiative has seen Stagecoach North East begin work on a £350,000 'green programme'. In spring of this year, energy consultants TNEI conducted an evaluation across each of its six depots and highlighted measures that could be taken to make it a more energy efficient and environmentally sustainable business. Following the report, Stagecoach created a five-year programme and has since begun investing in initiatives that include the installation of energy monitoring systems, the insulation of plant equipment and the creation of an eco team at each depot to motivate staff. Other work includes the implementation of voltage

I ENJOY IT HERE. I'D
BE LYING IF I
SAID I DIDN'T
ENJOY WORKING
IN THE BUS
INDUSTRY

optimisation, the installation of VSD compressors and radiant heaters, together with the replacement of all high bay lighting

Individual depots will be rewarded for their achievements and therefore drive further efficiency across the company.

John Conroy, managing director, Stagecoach North East said: "As a transport provider we believe we have a responsibility to be environmentally sound and operate a sustainable network on every level. While we are constantly investing in our fleet to ensure that our vehicles are as technologically advanced as possible, we felt there was more that we could achieve and after much research we

Meet the Team

STAGECOACH NORTH EAST



Engineering staff at Walkergate (above); Steve Callaghan & David Aird at South Shields (below)

have identified ways in which we can be more socially responsible in terms of the environment.

"We hope to significantly reduce our energy consumption, material waste and our carbon footprint, while educating and encouraging our staff to be environmentally aware. The programme is groundbreaking and we hope that our work in the North East will act as a model of best practice and inspire other regions and operators to adopt similar strategies."

South Shields depot

Occupying a site between Dean Road and the Metro line in the middle of South Shields, the depot is conveniently located close to the main town centre bus stops.

Opened in 1906, the depot has a PVR (Peak Vehicles Requirement) of 61, with a total of 69 buses. The allocation includes Alexander Dash-bodied Darts, Alexander PS-bodied Volvo B10Ms and Alexander-bodied Volvo B10LEs. Not to be forgotten is the vintage Daimler bus, LCU112, which has been preserved in South Shields Corporation blue and cream livery.

The depot has a staff of 197, which includes 162 drivers, with the remainder comprising engineering, administration and supervisory staff. The management team is headed by operations manager Brian Sleightholme and includes John Fraser as assistant operations manager and Steve Callaghan as engineering manager.

Something that instantly becomes apparent as a visitor to the depot is the

pride taken by the staff. For example, a flower bed occupies a square of land at the back of the traffic office next to the canteen, turning a potentially dark and unkempt area into something that's pleasant on the eye and of the variety that would not normally be associated with a bus depot.

"It's maintained by driver George Scott. He's a keen gardener and grows his own plants. The staff love to sit out



there on fine days," commented Brian, as he showed me around.

What is now the traffic office used to be the travel shop.

"With the increase in on-bus ticket sales, the requirement for a dedicated travel shop has declined," said Brian. "However, we need a point of contact for our passengers, so we have retained a desk to answer queries."

"We've spent a lot of money on the buildings over the last five to six years. Most of the work has been undertaken by our drivers. We've got tradesmen among the team here, so we've used their skills."

I can't help noticing the blue colour scheme throughout the buildings.

"I like the place to look clean and tidy. The colour blue is reminiscent of the traditional South Shields colours," continued Brian. "We're very proud of things here. The depot is over a hundred years old and it's got a very family feel about it."

Brian is not wrong either. I spot staff enjoying a chat and greeting each other as they pass, including me as a visitor – always a good sign.

"We're also proud of our notice boards, which we see as being particularly important. They're kept up to date and carry a variety of different information."

Again, he's not wrong there either. Complementing the boards are pictures of the depot's past vehicle allocation – including trams, trolley buses and motorbuses.

Brian continued: "Another big thing for us here is the depot performance



AT A GLANCE

WALKERGATE

OPENED: 2007

FLEET: 900

STAFF: 350

SOUTH SHIELDS

OPENED: 1906

**FLEET: PVR of 61,
Total 69**

STAFF: 197

Inside part of South Shields depot (above); Alan John of Walkergate works on Volvo Olympian N723LTN (right); South Shields Union staff Ray Raynsford & Jim Ainsley (far right)

league table. Factors include NVQs, reliability at morning run-out, attendance and timeliness. Last year we won cash to buy everyone a bottle of wine. I think in future that money will go towards activities such as a day out for the families at Beamish [Heritage Museum] for example."

Pointing to another notice board, Brian continued: "We place a big emphasis here on educating drivers about accident reduction."

Brian introduced me to Martyn Levett, who's on placement at South Shields with Stagecoach's staff development programme. With a London accent, I was intrigued when he told me that he was from Scotland.

"I moved up to Scotland six years ago, where my better half is from," explained Martyn. I spent four years working for Strathgry before Stagecoach took over. I'm very privileged to be on the scheme – about a dozen people per annum are taken on. I got told I'd be sent somewhere to see how things should be done," he laughed.

All of a sudden, Brian went quiet and I couldn't help pointing that out. In his usual modest way, Brian replied: "We do have our problems like everywhere else but we try to get on and deal with them."

Martyn continued: "I'm very impressed with what I've seen here – I might even pop my flash drive in when nobody's looking!"

I was then introduced to Ray Raynsford, secretary of the Unite Union at the depot and Jim Ainsley, union



**YOU CAN BE HERE
FOR FIFTEEN YEARS
AND STILL BE A NEW
KID ON THE BLOCK.
PEOPLE TEND TO
STAY HERE**

chairman.

"Our industrial relations here are very good," said Brian. He appeared to be correct, if my usual banter test was anything to go by.

Brian continued: "I'd say the staff here are generally very good."

"You would say that in this office!" laughed Ray.

"I started here at the age of 18,

left for a couple of years and then came back," said Ray. "I started as a conductor in 1965. The business was called South Shields in those days and you almost had to be family to join – there was lots of brothers working here. We've got a lot of long serving staff, with 20 drivers having more than 20 years' service and 13 with over 30 years – none of whom are aged over 60 as yet! You can be here for 15 years and still be a new kid on the block. When I first started here, trolley busmen used to use one side of the loos and motor busmen the other. You had to be 21 to be a trolley bus conductor."

Jim on the other hand has completed 35 years' service. He started as a conductor and has worked here ever since.

Brian showed me round the engineering side of the depot. Tram



tracks still adorn the floor in both buildings, but forget images of a dark, filthy, decaying garage area for the site was clean and well kept.

I met Steve Callaghan, engineering manager, his South Walian accent being instantly recognisable to a Welshman like me. He sounded like he's from Pontypridd, or should I say 'Ponty', to the natives. It turned out that I was not wrong.

"I was born in Wales and I served my time at Taff Ely in Pontypridd – I left there in 1981. I met my wife, who's from South Shields, on holiday and that's how I ended up in the North East," explained Steve.

"A vacancy came up and I came up through the staff development programme. I regard myself as an adopted Geordie," laughed Steve.

CBW is indebted Stagecoach North East

SETRA S415 GT-HD



Setra gears itself for the future

CBW's Gareth Evans test drives a Setra S415 GT-HD with Mercedes-Benz's new GO240-8 PowerShift transmission

Yes, I admit it – I do have a soft spot for Setra coaches. That said, in my job I can't afford to be complacent and being cynical is something that goes with the territory.

However, when Mike Beagrie, general manager of Setra in the UK suggested I might like pop over to Coventry to test-drive a brand new type of transmission, I jumped at the opportunity, as ever. I was intrigued to know what was so different about the new transmission compared to the established ZF AS-Tronic, which having experienced it during my ten-day tour

to Austria with Edwards Coaches in a tri-axle S416GT-HD [CBW 845/846], I must admit I rather liked.

Explained Mike: "In a nutshell, it's an alternative driveline developed in-house by Mercedes-Benz, specifically to deliver efficient, reliable performance with the greatest possible comfort. It is also lighter to reduce weight."

Out on the road

On the face of it, this particular S415GT-HD is little different from any other. However, make yourself

comfortable in the driving seat, and if you've had previous experience of a Setra with ZF AS-Tronic, something that instantly becomes apparent is the appearance of the GO240-8 PowerShift gear selector. Put simply it has two buttons located either side of the stick. The left-hand button must be pressed when moving the stick to engage gear, while the right-hand button acts as a type of re-set button to neutral.

Having engaged drive, by default, the coach starts in second gear, although a first gear option is also available – it's simply a matter of



moving the toggle. In a similar way to ZF's AS-Tronic, all shift and clutch actuations are operated automatically.

In order to re-acclimatise myself with the Setra, I drove the coach in automatic mode at first.

"So what do you think of it then Gareth?" asked Mike as we were mid way up the M69 from Coventry to Leicester.

"Well it just feels like a Setra," came my rather unhelpful reply. I could tell this was not quite the answer he was after and I felt a bit bad for failing to come out with something more enthusiastic, so thought I'd better explain. "It's one of the things I love about Setras - effortless to drive. You know - it feels well built and that you're driving a coach that's got class. You feel proud to be behind the wheel. It's also very smooth and quiet. It's also the kind of coach that people pass

you in other vehicles and turn to look at you with facial expressions of 'that's a nice coach!'."

After a further pause, I started chuckling, and did the usual dangerous thing of thinking out aloud. "Without intending to sound really dippy, I'm driving in eighth gear and I keep thinking it's wrong - it should be in twelfth," I said.

"That really was a blonde moment

THE NEW TRANSMISSION SEEMS TO BE MORE RESPONSIVE, MORE INTUITIVE AND USER-FRIENDLY



Gareth," laughed Mike.

"Well I've been on a dates with a couple of blondes lately, so perhaps it's rubbing off on me!" I swiftly replied, which provoked further laughter.

Having fewer gear changes is a definite bonus as far as I could see - the coach picks up speed that much quicker.

The high overall ratio of the transmission allows cruising at 100km/h [62.5mph] at 1,200 revs, with the result that fuel consumption is minimised at cruising speed.

Having reached Leicester on the M69, we then headed down the M1 to junction 20 at Lutterworth, before joining the dual carriageway and then picking up the A5, heading west in the direction of Coventry. I decided the aforementioned, with relatively little traffic, interlaced with a selection of



Above: The S415 GT-HD looks the part; right: driver's area similar to other S415s, but gear selector is the big difference; far right: ample legroom; bottom: stylish interior



HGVs and a stream of roundabouts, provided an ideal opportunity to put the new transmission to the test.

Put simply, the manual option gives the control that goes with a traditional manual, but also gives the ease of operation of an automatic. I found at certain times that it was easier to use the manual, while at others it seemed quicker to select the automatic.

That said however, the new transmission seemed to be more responsive, with the result that it was quicker at pulling away, making it more intuitive and user friendly

While inevitably one would use the automatic for conventional day-to-day work, I believe the manual option would really come into its own on steep climbs and particularly on winter

First Drive

SETRA S415 GT-HD



Above: Usual top quality finish on the Setra's bodywork; below: servery area

continental touring work as it gives the driver the necessary control.

At the same time, the integrated Voith retarder, which has up to 3,750 Nm braking torque, provides for a smooth, yet rapid deceleration - that is to say there appears to be no danger of passengers being flung from their seats.

Specification & availability

Powered by a Euro 5 12 litre Mercedes-Benz OM457LA engine with six in-line cylinders, generating 428BHP, the Setra S415GT-HD is part of the German manufacturer's 'Comfort Class' range.

The coach is fitted with 49 seats, which feature sturdy seat back tables, magazine nets and foot rests. The seats have lateral adjustment, so can also be moved out into the gangway

Setra says the gearbox has been designed from day one specifically for coaches. The ratios are tailored for coaches, which has enabled the building of a lighter gearbox, which helps minimise vehicle weight, which in turn increases reliability and minimises the lifetime service costs.

A lighter gearbox without a clutch also means there is relief for the driver, which in turn results in increased fuel economy.

Setra says the move forms part of



its initiative towards Euro 6 emissions standards, with the drive to minimise gross vehicle weight.

As for maintenance, Setra says that while the gearbox is lighter, it maintains the existing dimensions of the Mercedes-Benz coach transmission family. Depending on application, it is claimed oil changes of up to 300,000km for transmission and retarder can be achieved. Simple and individual spare part replacement is assured thanks to the modular built-on automation components.

"This new gearbox option will be available on the Setra ComfortClass S415 GT HD from the second quarter

of next year," explained Mike Beagrie, "And we'll be starting to take orders at the Euro Bus Expo at the NEC, hence its timely launch. It will be introduced to the tri-axle S416GT-HD towards the end of next year."

One of the effects of a weak pound against the Euro is the increased cost of all coaches for next year, with figures across the industry ranging around 15 to 20 percent.

"Next year the effects of the exchange rate are going to cost us an around 17% overall, but thanks to the size of Daimler, we are better placed to take a long term view," said Mike. "That said however, there is a limit to the amount we can absorb. In recent years we've been able to limit cost increases to less than 2% per annum, whilst others have increased by much more. Next year our prices will increase by around nine and a half percent, with many manufacturers talking about much higher rises."

Conclusion

I found the S415GT-HD to be a pleasure to drive. It has the best of both worlds - the control of a manual gearbox, but with ease that comes with an automatic.

CBW is indebted to EvoBus UK Ltd

FACT FILE

Setra S415 GT-HD

Chassis/body

Setra S415 GT-HD (integral)

Engine Mercedes-Benz OM457LA, 428BHP, Euro 5

Transmission Mercedes-Benz GO240-8 Power-Shift. Available as standard fit

Seats 49

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New flagship model set to turn heads

Plaxton coach will be initially available on Volvo's B12BT, with MAN and Irisbus examples to follow. Martin Cole reports.

Plaxton's new flagship coach will be making its public debut at the Euro Bus Expo exhibition this week and visitors who have already seen the artist's rendition will be impressed by just how close the finished product is to that image.

Remaining tight-lipped over the name of the new model until it is revealed at 0830 hrs on the opening day of Expo on November 4, Plaxton points out that it is an additional model to its line up and not a replacement for Panther, Paragon or Profile.

Sales director Kevin Wood said: "The new coach is a premiere product aimed squarely at the top sector. It not only gives regular Plaxton customers a higher specification option than has previously been available to them, it is something we strongly believe will win over a lot of customers who are currently not Plaxton buyers.

"Indeed, it has not only been given some serious attention from specialist designers Capoco, it has been developed in conjunction with input from a lot of operators. We've sought their opinions and advice, listened hard to what they had to say and done our best to make good use of the feedback we've received. We've specifically talked to a lot of non-Plaxton customers to see what it is we could do to make the product fit their requirements.

"What quickly became clear was that, increasingly, operators are becoming switched on by the 'wow factor' and so they respond favourably to stylish 'head turning' designs which they feel will appeal to their clients."

The show example and all initial production will be based on the Volvo

B12BT tri-axle chassis but there will be MAN and Irisbus examples, on two or three axles during the course of 2009. Tri-axle versions will measure 14m while two-axle coaches will be 13.2m.

Kevin Wood added: "We knew it was important to retain our clear lead on providing coaches with a low weight and we've certainly been the lowest in class and provided our customers with greater flexibility. We also wanted to retain the theatre-style seating which has been so popular, but also to take it to a new level, and so much of our effort has been concentrated on the passenger environment to improve vision further.

IN FACT, SOME OF THE FRAMING TOWARDS THE REAR OF THE COACH IS IDENTICAL TO THE PANTHER/PARAGON

"Stainless steel framing played a key part in keeping weight low so we have retained this too. In fact some of the framing, towards the rear of the coach, is identical to Panther/Paragon. We've also moved to GRP mouldings for the roof, waist panel and locker doors. The bumpers are all three-piece mouldings for ease of repair and replacement

The coach certainly has a lot of visual appeal. The curvaceous roof line allows the installation of a fully integrated air conditioning system, without the need for a traditional pod-style housing, all under one





Above: Plaxton's new tri-axle.
Below: stylish entrance steps

aerodynamic profile. It looks neater and will almost certainly be an aid to higher fuel efficiency.

The huge windscreen is in three sections and bonded in position. It employs 7mm double curvature glass in the main and overhead screens and the slim bottom section is made from polycarbonate as it is purely cosmetic. The overhead screen incorporates a heating element and has a built-in UV filter. The main screen can also be heated and this additionally contains an acoustic insulation.

Side windows follow the profile of

the roofline which means the first two bays on either side have unique panels.

The rear screen is also a double curvature unit. Above it is a rear spoiler which extends the roofline and provides a suitable location point for high-level repeating brake and indicator lights plus a housing for the reversing camera.

The front overhang on the new coach has been extended to allow provision for a wheelchair lift. Plaxton has opted for the PLS unit and this resides under the top step when

installed. The entrance door has been made much wider and the throat width of the stairwell is an impressive 1,170mm.

Customers not seeking a coach with a passenger lift can order the plain stepwell. Those wishing to have the lift will have a modified step area which features a raised, sloping profile to the right-hand side of the steps. Plaxton says it is a simple matter to convert a plain stepwell so it will also be possible to retrofit the lift system should it become necessary.

Getting aboard, the slim dash unit

Vehicle Launch

has been redesigned to offer a highly ergonomic arrangement of controls and switches. Importantly, the dash actually allows the digital tachograph to be installed at a point where the driver can see the readout panel!

In a bid keep the driver's area as accessible and tidy as possible, the I-Shift control lever has been mounted on the right-hand side.

Above the dash is a large 19 inch Blaupunkt monitor which resides in a slim, stylish housing when not in use. The DVD and audio equipment is Blaupunkt System 6.

Despite its slim nature, the dash incorporates a capacious fridge unit which we were led to believe will accommodate 64 standard cans of drink - just enough, we were assured, to sustain Kevin Wood on one of his 'nights out'!

The trim materials have been revised and include a new non-pile carpet for the floor and inset tread carpets on all steps - designed for easy removal.

Seating is by Fainsa and the new, exclusive, Gala 1020 design features wider seat cushions and integral three-point all-age seatbelts which operate from the side of the seat. The show vehicle seats all feature leather upholstery. The saloon is equipped

IT IS SOMETHING
WE BELIEVE WILL
WIN OVER A LOT OF
CUSTOMERS WHO
ARE NOT CURRENTLY
PLAXTON BUYERS

with just 38 seats as the rear section has 16 seats positioned around tables. It also has, for the first time, a rear saloon toilet and kitchen. Both are completely new developments from Shades. A centre sunken toilet is also an option and this too is a newly designed Shades' unit.

As the new vehicle has been built to European 2001/85 regulations, it does not need a traditional emergency exit. The centre continental door, along with roof-mounted ventilation/escape hatches is deemed sufficient. The continental door is also power operated for the first time.

Luggage capacity on the new coach is a generous 11.09 cubic metres on two-axle 13.2m versions and 10.98m³



Above: rear spoiler extends to the roofline; below left: entrance can be easily converted to accommodate a lift; below left: wide entrance door to courier seat



on 14m tri-axle variants. Luggage lockers are equipped with power-operated parallel lift doors.

Internally, the newly-styled luggage racks are equipped with aircraft-style locker doors and feature new passenger sets. Hidden 'uplighting' delivers an adequate pool of light above the centre aisle.

Seating capacity on the 13.2m model is 52 which drops to 49 with a centre sunken toilet or to 48 with a rear saloon toilet and servery. On the triaxle model capacity is 59 or 57 with a centre toilet and 55 with the rear saloon toilet and servery.

Climate control is handled by a continental ThermoKing system with a separate zoning control to provide the driver with his or her preferred environment. Customers preferring a Sutrak system can specify one.

Plaxton appears to have done a sterling job in developing something which has significant visual and

practical advantages which will certainly appeal to passengers. It will not be a cheap item. It is most definitely a premium product and the price will reflect this, but the package has sufficient merit to warrant the term flagship. Aside from the efforts of Capoco, a lot of credit must also go to the efforts of Mike Pixton and his team who have implemented the development of the new coach.

Beyond the home market, Plaxton tentatively hopes this vehicle will appeal to continental operators and will be investigating the possibility of supplying it into Europe. No doubt they will tread cautiously after the previous attempt in the mid-90s when the ill-fated Prestige, built in the French Carrosserie Lorraine plant, failed to make any impression.

Whatever its new name, the coach and its features tick a lot of boxes. For most operators it will be worth a visit to Expo to see this elite exhibit alone.



Below: I-Shift mounted on right to keep driver's area tidy; below left: luxurious leather-trimmed reclining seats; above: new luggage racks feature hidden uplighting; top: 19" Blaupunkt system 6 screen; top right: Shades-designed kitchen; below right: washroom – also designed by Shades.





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Backhouse Jones directors (back l-r) Ian Jones, Mike Cunningham and Andrew Woolfall. Front: James and Jonathon Backhouse

Claims handling service

A new service from the team at Backhouse Jones is bringing to the independent, small- and medium-sized operators what has for years been the reserve of the elite. Rupert King reports.

Every bus and coach operator would bite your hand off if you offered them a 25% reduction in their insurance costs. But many would know the risk associated with the deal. Bumping up the excess to maximum levels to knock down premiums has long been the method of insurance companies and has been reluctantly accepted by fleet operators.

The trouble emerges when the dreaded call arrives. 'X999's had a bump in the market place. Two cars involved, a handful of minor injuries, blame not yet established'. With the majority of insurance claims falling in the bottom category, such as the

standard £2,500 for whiplash, this poses a major dilemma for the small- and medium-sized operator in terms of how to deal with the resulting claims.

Outsourcing the problem

Historically, in the event of claims for compensation being made against an operator, the worst-case scenario is for them to deal with it themselves. The process of denying liability, then denying the claims and all the legalities in between is not at the core of an operator's business.

Also common is for an operator to pay a fee to their insurance broker to deal with the claim as often brokers are

not in the business of handling claims. Insurance companies have started saying 'we'll handle it for a fee', but is it in their interests to fight a spurious claim they will reclaim through next year's premium anyway?

Backhouse Jones' director Christine Kett explained the situation that led to a new option: "We were approached by a Plc transport client of Backhouse Jones, asking if we would be interested in handling their pre-litigated claims. Whilst this multi-national client was innovative enough to use our service we thought we could expand the handling services so that smaller operators could also benefit.

We did look into having a department within Backhouse Jones that did claims handling, but for accountancy purposes, kept it separate and so Nineteen23 was born."

Nineteen23 is a separate entity to Backhouse Jones, but shares five of its six directors. It offers a complete service from the moment of an incident to a court summons arriving. In the event of an incident, drivers will be instructed to call the 24-hour-a-day, 365-days-a-year incident line, the number for which will be neatly stored on a card in their cab.

From this point on, Nineteen23 takes over. By extensive and ongoing dialogue with the operations managers, the first thing Nineteen23 do is to establish that the registration plates all tie up with details held by the operator and that they can confirm the vehicle was supposed to be where it was at the time of the incident. Once established, an operator's involvement in the claims handling process can be as hands on, or distant as they wish.

"At all times we will advise clients about what is going on," Christine explains. "One of the key elements is that the client hasn't lost control, but they have lost the aggravation and the staffing costs of claims handling, and they know the job is being done professionally."

In a nutshell, Nineteen23 is about the outsourcing of a problem and, another selling point, at a fixed rate. Getting rid of grief with the certainty of knowing what it is going to cost is something rarely offered to a small business.

So whether an operator chooses to admit liability or fight it, the price remains the same and it can be budgeted for. In an industry operating with small margins, open-ended costs are a killer, something Nineteen23 realised when talking to the market prior to its launch in October.

Efficiency in numbers

Nineteen23 recruited six experienced claims handlers prior to last month's launch. Each has said they have never worked in an environment where they are basically, working to the daily post.

Historically, insurance claims handlers have operated on very, very tight budgets, with one member of staff having up to 600 files, which inevitably causes a backlog. As the backlog builds, so do calls and files and with claimants saying 'you have 28 days to respond before a summons



IT IS NOT ALWAYS
IN THE INTERESTS
OF INSURANCE
COMPANIES
TO DEFEND
OPERATORS.

Christine Kett
is a director of
Backhouse Jones
and Nineteen23

is issued', it is not uncommon to hear of bus companies receiving court summons because their handlers couldn't deal with the case in time.

"But we decided to invest in the service and they are working on a 48-hour basis now. All post is turned around within 48-hours. We could have got away with bringing in two handlers, six is traditionally very high, but to us, that isn't a service," explains Christine.

And as a leading name in transport law, service is something that Backhouse Jones prides itself on. The current generation at Backhouse Jones transport solicitors are a dynamic team of lawyers, with a wealth of experience

drawn from this tradition. Backhouse Jones transport solicitors has a detailed understanding of the issues confronting today's transport industry, with clients including many household names in the transport industry.

Assuming control

The essence of the 'claim culture' has left operators in the middle. With many people now seeing it as their right to claim for anything that cannot be directly blamed upon them and them alone, insurance firms have had to raise excesses and premiums to recover costs and the risk of such costs.

Ian Jones is another director of both Backhouse Jones and Nineteen23. "Look at the average claimant," he says. "They consider a claim for whiplash to be a branch of social security. I have a pretty low view of some insurance companies in this because their interest is not always in defending operators. They will see economic settlements to be appropriate, and the following year will hike up your premium."

"So what is happening is far-sighted companies are assuming control. The bigger operators have squeezed out inefficiencies and treat claims as another thing to be managed. This is what we're offering to everyone."

An offer no one should dismiss. We all live in a world where economies of scale are hugely important. The family-owned ten-vehicle operator does not have a host of luxuries afforded to the big groups. The cost of supplies are often higher, credit costs more and when a whiplash claim comes in, the cost, time and inconvenience of fighting it has been greater for a small firm. Until now.

"Previously, this facility has only been available to the elite," continues Ian. "There is a reason why the big bus groups all operate on this model - this model works."

"Also what's important is that we have a real interest in getting it right. We are permanently sitting an exam that the client is marking. The way we see it is: 'this is the knowledge economy. You either add value or get out'. We add value."

■ Nineteen23 can be contacted by calling 0845 0001923.



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claims figured out

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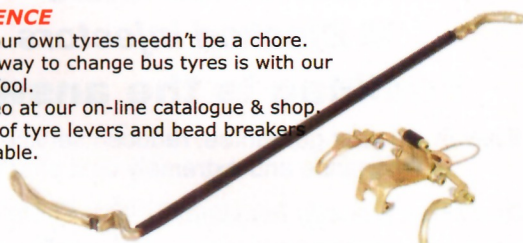
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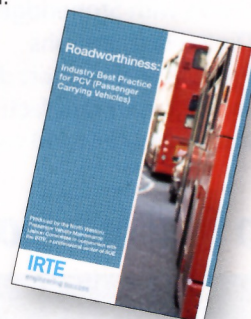
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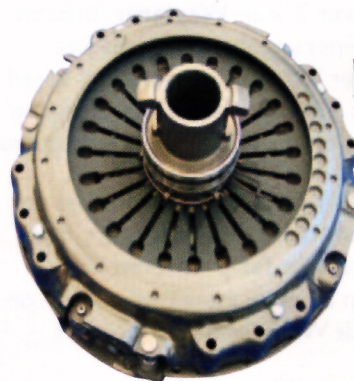
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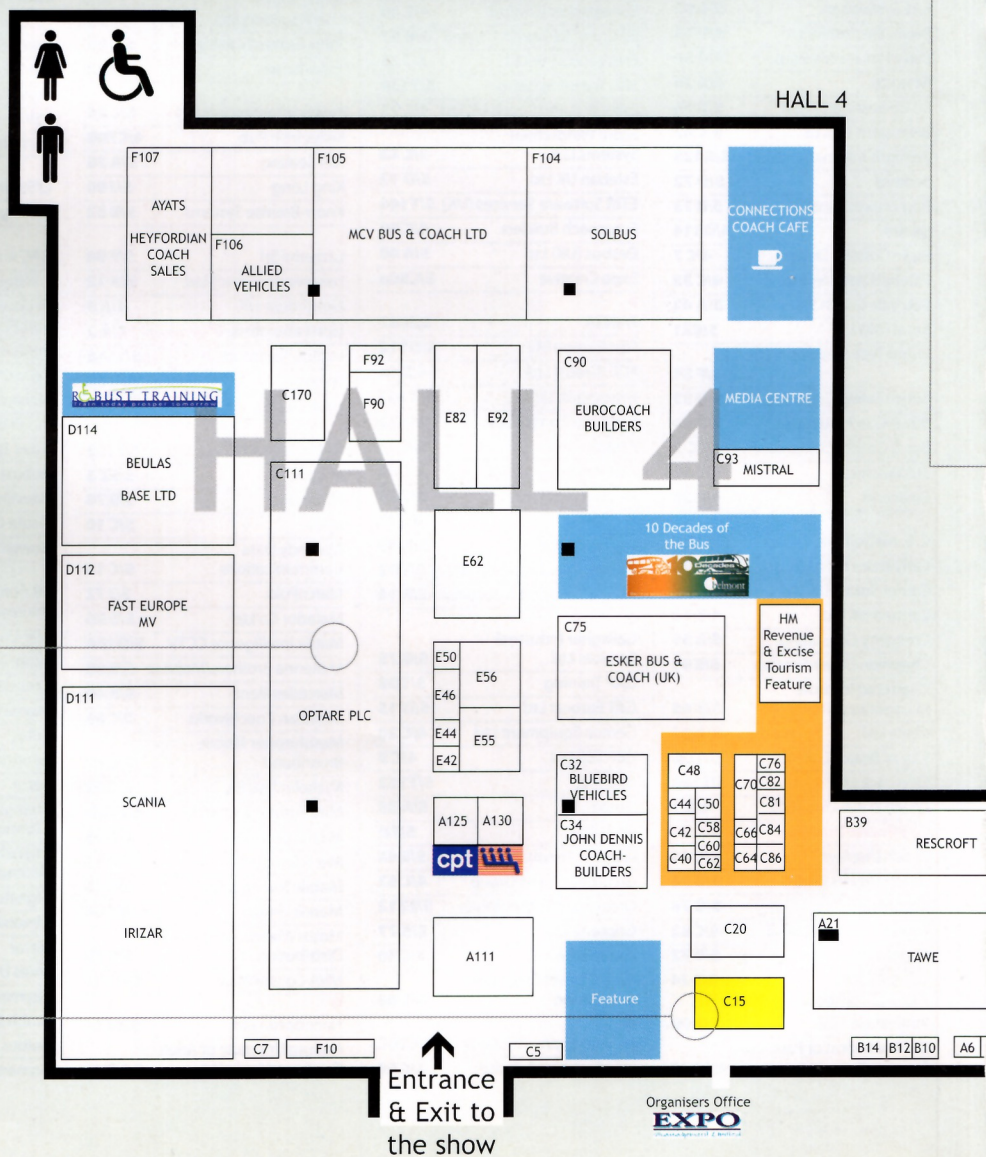
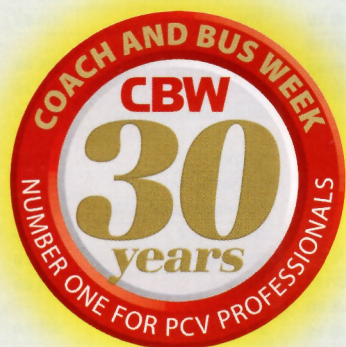
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Floorplan

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as at 14/10/08

The coachman who fell to Earth

Alan Payling meets the tour and coach operator who runs his business completely online.

When I was researching last week's article about the mobile online technology that is now available and the way it is being used in the coach trade, I had only located drivers who could see the potential and were using it in the course of their work. I was also very keen however to track down an operator who ran his business while on the road.

I was fortunate indeed therefore to run into Paul William Thomas at Torquay's Kistor Hotel where he was running a holiday for tour operator Torquay Travel. It would not be unkind to describe him as being the coach trade's answer to the man who fell to earth as he now runs his business almost entirely from cyberspace.

When *CBW* usually profiles an operator, the main focus of attention is normally upon the vehicles that they use in their business. This profile will take a completely different perspective investigating the imaginative way Paul manages his business via the internet using the very latest mobile technology.

The man who fell to earth

Paul William Thomas is the 40-year-old managing director of WT Travel and Skelton Tours based, in theory anyway, in Bridgewater, Somerset. Paul runs WT Travel to provide corporate, day hire and contract tour hires, while Skelton Travel offers Paul's own tours and day trips. He covers all his work with the three coaches he operates.

Paul is very much a hands on operator in every sense of the word. He is to be found out driving his own coaches for about two and a half weeks a month in the UK and on the continent. This means that he has to run his business while he is on the road, literally, from anywhere in Europe.

To achieve this Paul is equipped with a Compaq laptop, an O₂ 3G dongle



Paul William Thomas now runs his business almost completely online

WHEN I'M PARKED UP I GET ON WITH MY WORK, WHEN SOME WOULD BE TWIDDLING THEIR THUMBS

and an Apple iPhone. His dongle has an unlimited download facility to ensure that he is not restricted to the amount of bandwidth he can access. He is also registered with BT Openzone at home. This means that, as he is a subscriber, wherever there is an Openzone hotspot, Paul can log on and get a good signal for his laptop at no extra cost. Paul will also pay to use wi-fi if there is a good signal available. Given that his laptop is the core of his operation, every night when Paul is on the road he backs up his data to his Barclays server. Should his laptop be

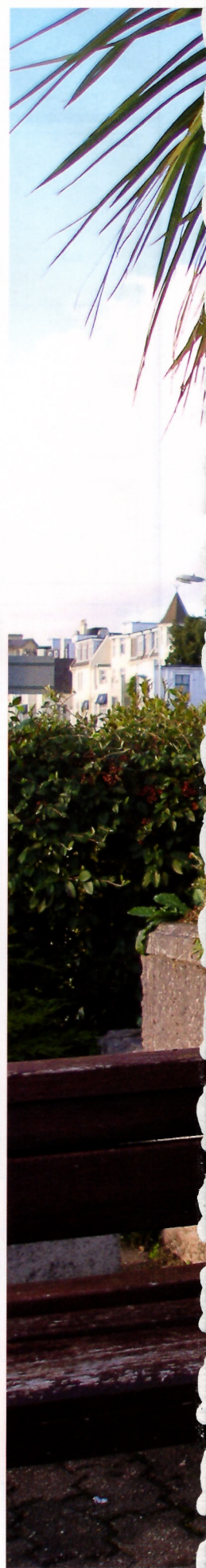
stolen or damaged then the files that are vital to his business are secure. His two drivers are also supplied with iPhones.

Paul is no stranger to technology. His keyboard experience goes back some 20 years when he first used one of the early Amstrads in connection with his first venture in the taxi trade. Responding to new developments and integrating them into his business is therefore no problem for Paul.

When you look at the way Paul runs his business you might be tempted to conclude that perhaps he does not have a very heavy workload. Far from it. Just for starters he has a contract with Torquay Travel to cover all their tours, some 300 per year. He also runs about 20 of his own holidays. Then there are three day trips of his own every week and two theatre trips to London or Bristol that he organises every month. He covers rail replacement work for companies such as First Rail and emergency air transfers for Excel. He also provides his coaches for group bookings in his local area; is responsible for transporting two carnival groups involved with the world famous Bridgewater Carnival and has just started supplying vehicles for Bridgewater College. Obviously his coaches are working extremely hard for him with the whole of his business organised online.

With regard to the infrastructure needed to run his business, this, thanks to the technology he has invested in, has been trimmed to the very barest of bones. Paul obviously has to have parking facilities for his coaches to comply with the requirements of his operator's licence. This is located in a yard in Bridgewater. And that, apart from his coaches, his front room and cyberspace, is all he has: indeed, it is all he needs.

With regard to staff, in order to take the bookings for Skelton Tours,





Paul employs a home based worker in Norfolk. She is equipped with a computer and once she has taken a booking she can access Paul's computer in order to download the information and keep him up to date. Otherwise, apart from himself and two drivers, again, that's it. Paul used to employ a staff member based in Bridgewater but with the advent of the latest mobile technology, Paul now saves himself staff costs of £20,000 a year and office costs of £800.00 per month running the business online himself.

He finds advantages in this way of working. He said: "I've got my finger on the pulse of the business. There is no one better to run the company than myself."

I wanted to know if this was actually an efficient way of working? Paul was certain about this when he told me: "It's about as efficient as we can get it."

So when does he find the time? Operators will know from their own experience that there are many occasions when they are just sat in the coach waiting around. That is why when some other small operators would be sat twiddling their thumbs in a coach park, Paul can get his laptop out, log on, and he is in his office. Paul said: "I can use the dead time when I am parked up to get on with my work. I can deal with the phone as the bookings will still be coming in."

Also, now that the online world never sleeps, when he is in his hotel room at the end of the day, again, he can just log on and get on with some work. There was one aspect of his operation that he was very clear about though to ensure the safety of all concerned: "I do not deal with business when I am driving. Everything goes straight through to the answerphone. I am very strict about that."

The Next Generation

The heart of his database is his Despatch System, provided by Renard. This handles most of his day to day administration such as those all important bookings. It is also used to keep track of driver and vehicle allocation and vehicle maintenance planning. It also includes pricing tools which Paul finds invaluable.

For example, when a customer requests a quote, the system he uses allows Paul to provide a price while he is out on the road, which he can then e-mail direct to the customer. He can then take a booking without



the customer knowing where he is or what he is doing. If a customer has a question Paul can quickly respond by logging on and dealing with their query.

It is worth noting that while Paul spends a lot of his time in cyberspace, he certainly keeps his feet on the ground given the market he operates in. As a result, he is acutely aware that many of his passengers are not familiar at all with the technology he uses. "On our tours, many of the passengers are elderly so we can't be too high tech. I combine e-mail with 'snail mail'. If I said to some passengers that I will e-mail something they would just look at me," he explained.

Nonetheless, in Paul's view, where there is a will, there is always a hi-tech way. Take the way he uses the new mobile technology for security purposes. Wherever he is, Paul can log on to the CCTV cameras back in his yard and they will transmit pictures direct to his laptop. The alarm system in his yard is also linked to his phone, so again, he can switch to his camera to see what is going on. Paul said that

when the alarm alerts him, "it sounds like the Starship Enterprise!" No doubt Bridgewater's answer to Captain Kirk can then investigate if he has a problem to deal with. The problem is that due to the new technology, Scotty is now redundant so there is no one to beam Captain Paul back to Somerset! The phones that are fitted in his coaches also transmit information about where his vehicles are which he can then track via his laptop. This Paul finds is a cheaper option than having a tracker fitted in the event of a coach being stolen or a bogus insurance claim being submitted.

It goes without saying that Paul banks and manages the financial side of his business in cyberspace. Monies can be transferred to pay bills online either via BACS or CHAPS. Given that his drivers can e-mail details of their working hours to him via their iPhones, Paul can then sort out the payment of their wages via his laptop. Invoicing his customers can be done via his SAGE software and the dreaded VAT return can also be sorted monthly via the web. With regard to financial

matters, while Paul will invest in the latest technology, it has to be cost effective. I was surprised, given the way he runs his business, to hear that he did not carry a mobile credit card reader. The reason was very simple. It is too expensive. He also said that: "Credit card companies are a bit funny about people paying for holidays and trips due to their dual liability if anything goes wrong." Going on to explain: "Most of our passengers are elderly. Neither they or the companies we work for have problems paying by cheque, BACS or CHAPS."

Part of his marketing operation is delegated to his website, which again, he can update regularly while he is on the road. Paul said: "If I am planning tours I can search for attractions. Say if I was going to Newquay, I can go online and use the web to plan a tour in half the time it used to take me."

Paul is not short of ways in which he can use his equipment. Take his iPhone for example. The satellite's eye view mapping feature allows him to check a location to see if he can actually get a coach there safely. Or, if

one of his driver's is having a problem finding somewhere, again, his iPhone allows him to zoom in from space. He can identify the place being sought and then transmit the image direct to his driver's iPhone. No more lost drivers. Paul finds this system more satisfactory than satnav. "Satnav will find it for you but with the satellite view you can check if you can actually get a coach into a particular location."

Back to the future

Given the way he is currently using the technology available it was fascinating to hear Paul expand on his thoughts for the future. He certainly has plenty of imaginative suggestions for extending the use of the existing technology that is available. Additionally, he is not short of ideas that coach manufacturers should take on board and integrate into the designs of the vehicles of the future.

For example, Paul will soon be purchasing a new printer to carry with him. He will be using this to print and then fax instructions to his drivers when they are staying in hotels. He would, however, like to have printers fitted in his coaches. This would enable him to send instructions direct to his drivers and thereby reduce the need for dead running back to base save for his six weekly vehicle inspections.

With the price of laptops continually falling he can see the day coming soon when he will be issuing his drivers with them. I asked Paul whether this might cause a problem with training. He could see difficulties, but for Paul, where there is a problem there quickly follows a solution. Talk about can-do. Paul said: "Most coach drivers are mature in age and find computers difficult. I would envisage utilising the Driver CPC training programme to provide a couple of days training in computers." Undaunted by any bureaucratic hurdles, he went on to say: "But that is something we would have to discuss with them to get them to recognise the need for and the advantages of training drivers in computer skills."

Moving ever onwards, he can also see the day in the not too distant future when his coaches are fitted with

forward facing CCTV cameras which could transmit pictures direct to his laptop. He would then know where his vehicles are and could see where they are going. This could also allow him to help drivers who are lost for example by having a driver's eye view of their location - and don't forget, he could do this from anywhere in Europe.

When Paul comes to be looking for new vehicles in the future he would like to see them fitted as standard with 240v power points. This would enable passengers to plug in laptops and devices such as mobile DVD players. A 240v power docking station would also help keep his laptop charged up.

Again, if someone can supply Paul with a vehicle fitted with a multi-channel entertainment system which allows passengers to choose their own radio programme for example, then Paul will be knocking on your door in the future. Many in the trade have seen passengers tracing their journey from their own paper maps. Paul would like to see more coaches with satnav being broadcast on the coach's monitors. The reason? Paul is obviously in touch with his clientele when he said: "Passengers like to see where they are. Being able to see the satnav on the screens would allow them to see where we are."

It was clear from speaking to Paul that the equipment he uses so enthusiastically is working extremely hard for him, his business and his bottom line. He pointed out: "As a small operator I can respond quickly to changes that affect me and my business much faster than some of the bigger companies. We can't do much about the price of fuel or the need to increase wages, but by cutting costs we can operate more effectively. The new technology helps me to do this."

I must say that when I was talking to Paul about the way he has integrated the latest technology into his business, I was at times almost awestruck by the opportunities it presents. In comparison to some other operators he is quite simply light years ahead, and, as far as they are concerned, he is disappearing fast into the ever changing future.

He not only has a considerable competitive edge already over the competition, but is well placed to take advantage of the constant changes that will no doubt continue taking place in this high tech environment. Take heed, he is going that fast, you might not be able to catch up, not this century anyway.

**MOST COACH
DRIVERS FIND
COMPUTERS
DIFFICULT, SO I
WOULD USE THE
CPC AS TRAINING**

Left: Paul the driver; below: Paul the MD running his business



Time for a change

The penultimate show in its current format, the CTA's Access 08 attracted a reasonable turnout and positive reports from exhibitors. Martin Cole reports on the show's highlights,

Formerly known as the CTA Event, Access 08 will likely be seen as something of a watershed exhibition as some major changes are on the way for the future.

Despite the awful timing of the exhibition, running just one week ahead of Euro Bus Expo at the NEC, there was a reasonable turnout of exhibitors and some of them reported a good show in terms of interest and serious enquiries.

The CTA has said there will be no exhibition in 2009 but it will run one more in February 2010 which will satisfy its contractual obligations with Manchester Central (G-Mex), avoid conflict with other key industry exhibitions - and from then on there will be a complete revision based on consultation and feedback from exhibitors, delegates and show visitors.

The CTA's chief executive, Keith Halstead, said: "We are changing the whole format of the event and its associated conferences and workshops. They will be carried out on a regional basis, possibly with up to eight separate venues and this will mean the workshops can be geared more specifically to the local regulations. There are significant differences between the way CT functions are handled in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, so area-specific workshops will make a great deal more sense.

"The timing of this year's exhibition was unfortunate and we have established a forum whereby we can thrash out a plan for the future. It doesn't seem to matter where we hold the exhibition, it is always a long way for some people to travel and we recognise there may well be a great deal of merit in having a show in the north and one in the south. If we can find suitable venues it would seem to be a sensible way forward. As the exhibitions will not be tied to the conference and workshop programme there will be less requirement for so many hotels in the immediate vicinity."

This year's highlights

As usual, there was a broad spectrum of vehicles on display but quite a few regular exhibitors had chosen not to show this year because Euro Bus Expo followed on too closely. There were also last minute withdrawals which saw Plaxton and Chassis Developments pull out.

However, those who chose to continue their support were generally very pleased by the quality of visitors.

Among the new products on show, two in particular stood out as contenders for 'star of the show' honours. Personally I was most impressed by the passenger airbag contained in a lap belt, made by AM-Safe and introduced by Cogent Seating, and by the GX-tra fully automatic underfloor passenger lift from PLS.

The Am-Safe belt is remarkably unobtrusive and looks just like a lap belt with some additional padding



on it. It can function purely as a lap belt or as part of a three-point lap and diagonal seatbelt system. If the device is triggered, by the weight of the passenger moving forwards, the airbag inflates on the passengers' lap, instantly filling the space between the torso and the seat or bulkhead in front. This means the passenger is held more firmly in the seat, the body cannot pivot forwards excessively and risk the neck or ruptured spleen injuries normally associated with lap belts. And it stops knees impacting on the seat back in front and causing possible injury to the passenger seated there.

Cogent's Roger Pownall said the air bag belt had been developed for use in light aircraft and that the civil aviation authorities were insisting on them becoming compulsory. They are also being adopted by school transport operators specifically for drivers, as it is thought the extra protection

would greatly reduce the risk of injury during a collision and leave the driver more able to render assistance to passengers.

Tony Bull of PLS said the GX-tra automatic lift project had begun five years ago, and after two years PLS had developed a prototype but it was deemed too complex, expensive and potentially unreliable. Operations such as automatic platform extension and folding the hand-rails were all

controlled by micro-switches and separate motors, but the design has been considerably advanced and now has a completely mechanical operation which requires a single hydraulic ram.

The new lift can also be operated by a remote control unit in addition to the traditional hard-wired pendant. It has a 925mm wide platform and will cost around £4,250-4,500 - some £700 more than a conventional underfloor lift.

Other new products attracting significant interest were the new Unwin Traxion lockable foot system for securing seating in tracking systems, and the aluminium-framed Hydra seat from Phoenix. The latter weighs just under 10kg without legs, is tested to M2 and is claimed to be no more expensive than a steel-framed seat.

Visitors will have noticed former Irisbus sales specialist Mike Gasper now working in a sales capacity for Stanford Coachworks. Other personnel changes include promotion for Alison Prince - who becomes National Sales Manager for Mellor Coachcraft. Roger Clode is also moving from Cogent Seating to UV Modular.

Vehicle builders noticed a considerable resurgence in interest from local authorities about the requirements for lowfloor minibuses. A number of them feel there future requirements will dictate a move to lowfloor and there are also current calls from day centre managers and other groups for vehicles they believe offer greater dignity to passengers in wheelchairs.

Desire is one thing - a willingness to pay for lowfloor minibus product is another. Mercedes-Benz currently produces a lowfloor Sprinter but it costs as much as the former Mini Pointer Dart which offered big bus engineering, more seats, better ground clearance and a 15-20 year service life. For coachbuilders or converters to go down the path of developing lowfloor chassis for attaching to minibus cowl is fraught with danger - notably it is highly expensive and potentially could fall foul of forthcoming European Whole Vehicle Type Approval regulations. Few would want to take on the task without a guarantee of significant sales volumes.

Past experience demonstrates enthusiastic potential customers suddenly withdraw from earlier commitments as the products begin to enter production - look what happened to the Alero!

WE'RE CHANGING THE WHOLE FORMAT OF THE EVENT AND ITS ASSOCIATED CONFERENCES AND WORKSHOPS

Below left: PLS fully auto GX; below: Aluminium framed Phoenix Hydra; top right: The new Unwin Traxion fitting; middle right: Alison Prince National Sales Manager; below right: AM-Safe seat belt air bag



Timely arrival of new operational support company

Experienced scheduler and operations director starts specialist services with CPC training to follow

This month sees the the launch of SandOSS, a new addition to the ranks of transport consultancies in England and Wales. SandOSS is an acronym for Schedule and Operations Support Services and, as the title suggests, the company will specialise in offering professional assistance across a broad range of operations functions, all designed from experienced industry experts.

With many operators recording increased patronage in recent months, the ability to buy in specialist services as and when needed is bound to be attractive. With this in mind, SandOSS has been formed to provide assistance either as an extra pair of hands when a company's full time staff are under pressure or to undertake specific functions in their entirety as the task of sourcing staff in this industry becomes ever more problematic.

"Efficient scheduling of vehicles and drivers is essential for all operators. With fuel and wage bills continuing to rise, the days when a schedule could be jotted on the back of a beer mat are gone forever!" SandOSS's director Nigel Purssell tells *CBW*. "A core operation for SandOSS is the provision of robust and cost effective schedules for all types of operations. From analysing current operational data to ensure that running time allowances are realistic, identifying areas of greatest demand, correlating information to devise new and revised services through to the planning and construction of time and duty schedules and staff rotas, this new company will work with operators to ensure maximum productivity across all areas of the business."

Nigel told *CBW* of his background in the industry: "I started in 1974 at the back - as a conductor with



Nigel Purssell

**EFFICIENT
SCHEDULING IS
ESSENTIAL. WE
WORK TO ENSURE
MAXIMUM
PRODUCTIVITY**

Alder Valley. After that I went to Thamesdown Transport as a scheduler and health and safety executive, then on to London Buses in '93 and London Suburban after that. I have worked on the operational teams at London Underground and Yorkshire Terrier and took 18 months out before setting this up.

"It's a long learning curve in this industry. From independents to the big groups, having worked in all sizes of organisations, it is all experience that helps with what I am doing now."

As well as scheduling, SandOSS can

also provide schedules for special and emergency operations such as rail replacement services and in the near future intends to add to its portfolio the supply of temporary supervisory staff to manage these additional workloads.

A register of those with experience in this field is being compiled and the company is keen to hear from anyone competent in this area who is interested in being considered for inclusion as a emergency replacement scheduler.

SandOSS can assist operators with tender submissions, including the preparation of alternative options for services where necessary, and will complete registration documentation on a client's behalf if and when instructed to do so. This service also extends to the files needed to register a service online as Electronic Bus service Registration replaces the paper based system across the industry in increasing numbers.

In other areas, SandOSS can perform driver and accident assessments to assist in maintaining standards and to help identify underlying causes of incidents. The company can also submit proposals to amend or add to existing procedures in order to rectify any problems identified during the procedure.

In addition, the company can act as the agent for an operator in dealings with the media, preparing press releases to promote an operation while reducing the chances of a hard won reputation being shattered by an unprepared comment being misquoted or distorted. Peace of mind for the small and medium operators whose experience with the media is limited. Complementary to this, SandOSS can also be engaged to prepare company statements and reports.

For the future, plans are well advanced for SandOSS to join the ranks of companies providing driver CPC and other training. However, the company will confine itself to the PCV market and thus be able to offer courses that specifically address the needs of bus and coach drivers. It is hoped that this service will be available early in 2009, so watch for announcements.

This new venture from Mr Purssell is sure to grab the attention of operators across the board. It is rare an experienced scheduler, administrator, communications advisor and general all-rounder can be found. Now, there is one just a phone call away.

■ Operators are invited to call 01709 322235 or email sandosspsv@googlemail.com for further information.



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D.A.C. COACHES

D.A.C. Coaches, of Gunnislake, Cornwall, has recently taken delivery of a VDL Bova Magiq 122.410MX 12.2 metre luxury coach.

The Magiq features the 410bhp DAF MX 12.9-litre engine to Euro 5 specification and ZF AS-Tronic gearbox with interarder.

Operating on behalf of Majestic Holidays, the Magiq usually travels on Austrian and Swiss tours.

"We have a long relationship with Bova," explains director Nick Smith. "Previous to this we have had Futuras and we like the product, so a Magiq was a logical next step. Moseley in the South are another reason behind the buy as well. They are superb. We get an excellent service and you always get a good deal from them."

The Magiq features 49/53 Vogel Conturo

luxury reclining sideways adjustable seats, air conditioning, a Webasto pre-heater with digital timer, ASR traction control, a coolbox, water boiler, Blaupunkt radio, PA and CD player and a DVD player with two flat panel monitors.

D.A.C stands for Dial-A-Cab, as the firm started out life in the mid-70s as a taxi company. It moved into minibuses and coaches in the last decade and runs a fleet of four executive coaches, six standard coaches and six Varios on local authority contracts.

FACT FILE

Chassis/body VDL Bova Magiq 122.410MX (integral)
Engine DAF MX 12.9-litre Euro 5
Transmission ZFAS-Tronic
Seats 49
Spec Coolbox, water boiler, DVD player
Supplied by Moseley in the South 01823 653000

CLIFFS COACHES

High Wycombe based Cliffs Coaches have just bought their first new Volvo – a tri-axle 9700 Prestige Plus.

Husband and wife team, Cliff and Jennifer Neighbour, wanted a new vehicle specifically to accommodate their growing business with Schools into Europe.

"Schools into Europe is an educational tour specialist taking over 30,000 children abroad every year," explained Cliff. "As health and safety becomes more and more important it is vital that schools are provided with coaches that meet the exacting standards required. This coach certainly does that and also adds comfort and luxury to enhance the children's experience of travelling abroad."

Cliff continued: "We looked at all the main manufacturers and the reason for choosing Volvo was the product itself – I truly believe the 9700 is the best on the market."

"When you're dealing with large groups who are spending significant amounts of time on a coach, comfort is a priority and this is definitely the most comfortable coach I've ever driven or been on."

The 13metre Volvo 9700 Prestige Plus is ideal for European touring. Specified with Volvo's DH12E engine rated at 460hp and the



I-Shift gearbox, it boasts enhanced safety features which make it particularly suitable for schools' travel. These include electronically controlled disc brakes (EBS), electronic stability program (ESP), powerful headlights with Bi Xenon lamps, large and prominently positioned brake lights, two and three-point safety belts for driver and passengers and reversing camera.

Other safety features on the 9700 include Front Impact Protection (FIPS)

and Knee Impact Protection (KIPS) which serve the driver and the guide; and also Front Under-run Protection (FUPS) which prevents a car from becoming wedged under the vehicle.

The 53 leather seats all have three point seat belts and theatre-style flooring ensures that all passengers have excellent viewing, while the climate control, servery, toilet and Volvo Sound & Vision entertainment system – comprising CD, DVD player and TFT monitors



HANSONS

A pair of ADL Enviro 200 buses have entered service with one of the Black Country's last remaining independent bus operators, Hansons Coaches of Lye.

The new buses have been acquired for use on two commercially-operated services, routes 250 and 292.

"We've run the 292 for many years and hope that the presence of a new bus, together with an enhanced timetable will lead to increased ridership," explained Ms Margaret Hanson.

Asked by CBW why she selected the Enviro 200, Ms

Hanson replied: "We like the Darts here and with one exception our entire fleet comes from the Dart/ADL stable. We bought some 12-metre Enviro 300s earlier this year and so the E200 was the obvious choice."

"We've gone for the Cummins engine and Allison gearbox as it makes things easier in the garage, with our fleet being standardised."

Based in Lye, near Stourbridge, the firm was established in 1969 as a driver training company and now operates 20 buses on a mixture of commercial and contract work, having entered bus operation at the dawn of deregulation in





- mean that every comfort is guaranteed.

The new 9700 has already gone into service and Cliff is delighted with it. "It's a dream machine. It looks fantastic, the seats are perfectly comfortable whatever the size or shape of our passengers and the drivers who have driven it absolutely love it!"

Cliffs Coaches was founded by Cliff and Jennifer over 30 years ago. In addition to the Schools into Europe business, Cliffs

Coaches specialise in private hire, contracts, airport transfers and corporate contracts around the London and High Wycombe area.

FACT FILE

Chassis/body Volvo 9700 Prestige Plus (integral)
Engine Volvo DH12E, 460hp
Transmission I-Shift
Seats 53
Spec Prestige
Supplied by Volvo Bus
 01926 401777

1986.

"We pride ourselves on giving passengers the personal touch here, which I believe definitely pays as we're fortunate to get lots of positive feedback about our driving staff," added Ms Hanson.

"I'm very pleased with the E200s. They're very customer friendly, yet they also look the part and are extremely eye catching. We've had no problems touch wood. I think our next new buses will probably be the same. I believe buying new works out cheaper in the long run, when you take into account warranties and you know what you're buying."

As to the future, Ms Hanson said: "I'm aiming to be completely SLF by the year 2010. I've only got five step-entrance buses remaining in the fleet, so am well on target."

Operator rating: 9/10 "No problems as yet. Next new buses will be ADL products."

FACT FILE

Chassis/body ADL Enviro 200 (integral)
Engine Cummins ISBe
Transmission Allison auto
Seats 27
Spec Standard
Supplied by Alliance & Leicester 0800 0565105

HAMS TRAVEL

Hams Travel recently took delivery of another Volvo B12BT Van Hool Alizee T9 Acron 13 metre luxury coach, on the back of a similar vehicle delivered in early 2008. The high specification of the vehicle includes 57 'Royal' class passenger seats with contrasting leather and moquette finish.

Seats have adjustable footrests and seat back tables, there is an electrically operated courier seat and driver's air suspended seat.

Chris Stock, operations manager, told *CBW*: "We always use Volvo engines and find the Van Hool body to be of very high quality."

"We run about 40-odd Volvos and the two this year are brilliant, to be honest, I can't fault them in any way



whatsoever."

The coaches feature the Volvo 420bhp Euro 4 engine and I-Shift gearbox. ASR traction control, Suttrak air conditioning, tinted and double glazed side windows and a DVD system with front 23" widescreen monitor and 15" fold down monitor to ensure comfort and entertainment for passengers.

Satellite navigation, a reversing camera and electric

sunblinds make the driver's job more enjoyable.

FACT FILE

Chassis/body Volvo B12B/ Van Hool T9 Acron
Engine Volvo 12-litre Euro 4
Transmission Volvo I-Shift
Seats 57
Spec DVD with monitors, sat nav
Supplied by Moseley in the South 01823 653000



Frederick Hunt, the family-run firm now operates 20 vehicles, of which 11 are front-line coaches and the remainder service buses and school contract vehicles.

In the 1970s Fred's sons, Charles and Michael, took over the business and have continued to build and develop the company, which undertakes a range of work, including private hire coaching, touring, local bus services and school contracts.

Asked by *CBW* about the new vehicle, Mr Taylor commented: "The new bus has enhanced this service, which is commercially operated. Our customers are very happy with it, while the drivers are equally at home behind the wheel of it, and touch wood, we've had no grief with it yet."

FACT FILE

Chassis/body Volvo B7RLE/ Wright Eclipse 2
Engine Volvo D7E, 290BHP
Transmission ZF 6HP554 auto
Seats 45
Spec Destination gear
Supplied by Southdown PSV 01342 715222
www.southdownpsv.co.uk

HUNT'S COACHES

Long established operator Hunts Coaches of Alford, on the Lincolnshire coast has recently purchased its first brand new bus.

The Wright Eclipse-bodied Volvo B7RLE has been acquired as part of an upgrade of the firm's commercially-operated service 7, which links Alford with Skegness.

Supplied by Southdown PSV, the 12-metre long Volvo B7RLE is powered by a Volvo D7E engine, generating 290BHP, coupled to a six-speed ZF 6HP554 automatic gearbox. With a seating

capacity of 45, the Wright Eclipse 2 bodywork is fitted with destination gear.

Jim Taylor, operations manager told *CBW*: "We were looking around for a new service bus, so having dealt with him in the past, we contacted Steve Swain at Southdown PSV. We went for the Wright/Volvo B7 combination because our fleet is mainly Volvo, so we feel we know the product. Our coach fleet is predominantly comprised of the tried and tested Volvo/ Van Hool combination. Having heard nothing but positive comments about Wright bodywork, we felt it seemed the natural choice. Founded in 1930 by



New LED indicators are more visible

LED BODYSIDE INDICATOR LAUNCHED

CBW
PRODUCT OF THE WEEK

BMAC has launched a new ECE category 6-approved Bodyside Indicator. This is designed

to address the European Bus/Coach manufacture and retrofit markets.

BMAC says its LED Bodyside Indicator delivers a design led, feature rich, high quality, competitively priced product that will delight end users and manufactures alike.

The new light features high power LEDs as its light source, which unlike the currently available lights using filament bulbs, last many times longer – reducing maintenance costs and the dangerous consequences of failed bulbs.

BMAC believes the new product is unique to the European market and will be very popular with many bus and coach operators.

“ECE category 6 light units, using LED technology is an important step forward. Compliance with this standard means ten times more

light down the flank of the vehicle than the previous Cat 5 version, which makes manoeuvring vehicles more visible to pedestrians, cyclists and other motorists,” said David Myers, sales and marketing manager at BMAC.

“Traditional filament bulbs are fragile and can fail when exposed to vibration and shock. If a bulb fails it is useless and the consequences are unthinkable if left undetected. Our LED option has no filament and lasts up to 50 times longer than traditional 21-watt bulbs. It’s much more reliable and reduces vehicle down-time, by reducing maintenance and bulb changes.”

The new indicator is easily installed and its superior build quality protects against water and dirt.

■ For further information contact David Myers on 0161 3373070.



NEW BUS FUEL SAVING SYSTEM

The first fuel saving system designed specifically for buses, in active use by around 600 drivers, indicates that bus operators could save 30% on their fuel bills. With diesel costs continuing to rise, operators are saving an average of more than £2,000 per vehicle.

At the same time as reducing fuel consumption, ECOManager also reduces carbon emissions – lowering a fleet’s carbon footprint by over 5,000kg per bus every year.

The ECOManager system includes a real time driver’s LED display which changes from green to amber to red according to their driving, providing instant efficiency feedback. The ‘Black Box’ records each journey and provides fully automated reporting by driver, bus or route. The system integrates with

the vehicle’s CAN system, therefore uses actual data rather than estimates based on parameters and assumptions.

By altering driver behaviour, ECOManager also reduces accidents and makes for a more pleasant passenger experience. Operators have found that the savings extend beyond just fuel, with maintenance costs also reduced through improved wear and tear, including tyres. Insurance costs are also reduced, due to a reduction in accidents and claims attributed in the past to harsh braking.

21st Century has developed a four-tier training programme to work alongside the software to maximise the benefits and maintain the savings. Drivers who require additional training can be identified through the comprehensive reporting system.

Drivers in the trial have welcomed the feedback, and some have

reported improved fuel consumption in their own vehicles as a result.

According to the company, the system pays for itself within a very short time-frame, as Paul Rogers explains: “Most fuel saving devices operate independently of CAN but ECOManager uses CAN data to achieve at least a 5% improvement in fuel economy, and the results so far have shown that even better fuel economy is easily achievable. When you add in additional savings on maintenance and insurance, plus the improved passenger experience and benefits to the environment, it is clear to see why many operators have contacted us. Those already using ECOManager will continue to reap benefits throughout the life of the vehicle.”

■ For more details contact brandontaggart@21stcenturycctv.com or go to www.21stcenturycctv.com.



LOOK RAISES IMAGE RESOLUTION STANDARD FOR MOBILE BUS AND COACH CCTV WITH NEW MOBILE DIGITAL VIDEO RECORDER

Look CCTV has raised the performance standard for bus and coach CCTV with the introduction of the Synectics T1000 range of mobile digital video recorders (DVR). For the first time, real-time image recording to D1 resolution, a standard normally found in high security CCTV applications, is now available in a mobile DVR system.

Developed in conjunction with Look and Synectics Systems Group’s best-in-class CCTV technology, the Synectics T1000 recorder supports between 2 and 16 real time, H.264 video channels and 4 audio channels.

Image retrieval options include twin removable 320 GB dual hard drives, Ethernet and Wireless LAN connectivity and USB memory stick. In the event that only the last

five minutes worth of recording is needed, the recorder also features Synectics patented Dual Path recording. This automatically records the last five minutes worth of footage from all cameras onto a solid state memory SD 16 GB+ card.

The T1000 is fully wireless enabled for IEEE 802.11b/g, GPRS Edge and 3G. At vehicle start-up, the driver display shows the view from each of the vehicle’s cameras, allowing the driver to quickly check that all cameras are working. This is supplemented by an array of camera and recorder diagnostics, all of which can be downloaded over a WLAN. The T1000’s reviewing software includes ‘live’ video search, historical playback, digital zoom and pan. All recordings include time, date, vehicle ID, GPS and ‘G’ Sensor data; and are secured by digital signature. This allows the CCTV reviewer to simultaneously view historical and ‘live’ video side by side with integrated vehicle tracking information.

Three years in development, the T1000 represents the pinnacle of mobile DVR technology, believes Look CCTV managing director, Andrew Prince. “We’ve worked with Synectics to ‘engineer in’ outstanding levels of reliability in the T1000 mobile DVR system. Add to this Synectics ability to provide CCTV image quality and resolution that delivers truly ‘evidential quality’ images, and I believe the T1000 sets new performance standards for the mobile market place,” he said.

■ For more information on the T1000 DVR contact Look CCTV on 01253 891222 or e-mail sales@lookcctv.com.



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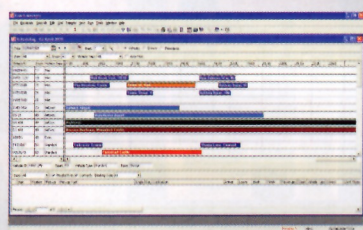
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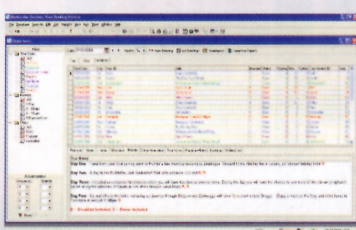
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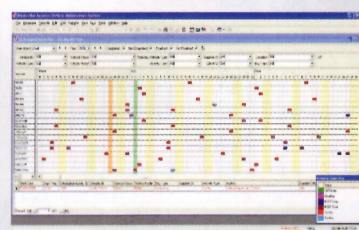
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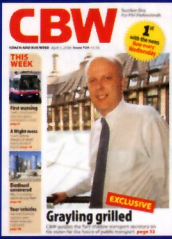
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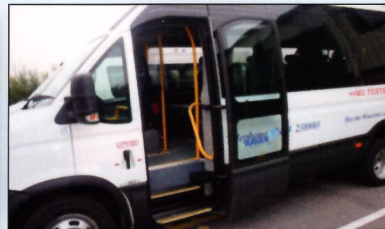
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MOT Oct 2009, taxed till 2009, base white, aircraft style side lockers, drop down mirrors, 49 reclining seats, rear toilet, PA, cassette radio. Good runner just spent over £3,000, 2 year tachometer checked 07/08, over 6 side double glazed units changed, good tyres all round. Maintained regardless of cost too much to list.

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£2,225 ono



1998 LEYLAND LDV CONVOY 16 seater factory bus, 3 point seat belts, COIF MOT until 22 July 2009
£2,225 ono
Both just finished on school runs



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DENNIS JAVELIN GX290 PLAXTON PREMIER



1993, 50 recliners, MOT March 08, taxed Sept 07, DVD, toilet, Euro, Cummins, double glazed.

£10,000 no VAT - NO OFFERS
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**3 Low Floor Dennis
Lances & 1 Dennis Dart**



1994 Dennis, Lances Wright Body, Duel Doors, 35 Seats Cummins C series Engines, ZF auto Gearboxes.

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1992 Dennis Dart Plaxton Pointer, Single Door, 35 seats, Cummins B series Engine Alison AT545 Gearbox, MOT Expired, Starts and drives interior very good.

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Neal Hogg, Fleet Engineer
Sullivan Buses

Office 01707643641
Mobile 07971818607

E Mail
neal@sullivanbuses.com

SETRA S215 HD 1992



Private plate, 49 recliners, drinks machine, toilet, curtains, on board vacuum, aisle carpet, MOT May 2009, tax October, new exhaust just fitted. Very good condition. Genuine reason for sale.

£16,000 £14,500+VAT ono

Tel: 02392 648764
(PORTSMOUTH)

Optare Solo M920



Regn. date 8/07/2002, MOT Sep 2009
Price £45,000 o.n.o.

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16 SEATER. WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE. 5 x WHEELCHAIR + 2 SEATS. FRONT ENTRY. TACHO. FULL 12 MONTHS COIF ON 21.10.08. UNDER FLOOR CASSETTE TAIL LIFT.

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48 seats, air con, DVD, full executive specification. Choice of 3.

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53 Rec. Seats, Crew Seat, 6-Speed Man. G\box, Dateless Reg. Number, Taxed & Tested, Low Mileage for Year, Superb Condition -

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1 x 53 Seat Dennis Javelin Neoplan Transliner GX – 1995 £18k ono

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2004 Ford Transit 2.4 Tdi

15 seater minibus,
110,000 miles, MOT April 2009
Tacho/COIF/PSV
£7,500 ono NO VAT

01622 831294
07868 343919

1998 R Reg NEOPLAN TRANSLINER DENNIS JAVELIN WITH CUMMINS ENGINE

49 seats, full executive specification.

MOT June 09

~~£26,000 + VAT ono~~

£24,000 + VAT

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1998 Noge Catalan 18.310, 6 speed, MOT January 2009
£40,000+vnt ono



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1993 Kassbohrer Setra 215 Tornado, 4/4 g-box, MOT July 2009
£12,000+vnt ono

All three coaches are in good condition and have the following:
Air Conditioning/Climate Control, Hot and cold drinks facility, DVD system, Radio/CD audio system

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Contact 07817557971 / 02476 644609

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£12,950 + VAT

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2002 (52 plate) 53 seats + crew seat, white exterior, MOT October 09, very good condition, 311,000 kms, owned from new.

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EOS 90 1995

49 seats, rear w/c
LEZ compliant

£35,000



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49 Seater, DVD/CD
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Cond, Fridge,
Reverse Camera,
Immaculate Condition,
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55/57 Seater, CD
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Excellent vehicles for
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Choice of 5.
From £15,500 o.n.o.

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- 1992 Setra 215 HD, toilet, video.... £15,000 ono
- 1992 Mercedes 609, 20 seater belted, hidaway wheelchair lift.... £4,000 ono
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2001 SETRA S315 GT HD



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DOUBLE DECKER SPECIALIST

1996 VOLVO OLYMPIANS

Cummins L10 engines and Voith gearboxes, 78 seats, converted to single door, new COIF, tyres included, UK registered and ready to work.

1997/8 VOLVO OLYMPIANS

Volvo engines, Euro 2, 78 seats, converted to single door, new COIF, tyres included, UK registered and ready to work.



1996 N REG VOLVO OLYMPIANS

Alexander bodies, ZF 5 speed automatics, 70 coach seats, air-con and wheelchair lift.



1990 H REG VOLVO D10M'S

ZF automatics, East Lancs bodies, 79 seats, new tests.



1995 M REG VOLVO B10B'S

Volvo/ZF, Plaxton Verde bodies, 52 seats, recent re-trims.



1993 K REG DENNIS LANCE

Cummins/ZF, 70 seats, new MOT, just repainted white.



1994/5 M/N REG DENNIS DARTS

Cummins/Allison, East Lancs bodies, 40 seats, very clean.



Due to delivery of our new buses we have 4 **Optare Spectra** low floor double deckers for sale. Daf engines/Voith gearboxes, 74 seats, Euro 3 engines, spotless inside and out.



1998/9 R/S REG DENNIS DART SLF'S

Cummins/Allison with trap fitted, Marshall bodies, 31/37 seats.



2001 DART MPD'S

Cummins Euro 3 engines, 29 seats, 8.8m, very tidy inside and out, good choice, all tested until 2009.



1998 S/T REG OPTARE SOLO'S, 8.5 M

Mercedes engines, 25 seats.



1998 R REG DENNIS DARTS

Cummins/Allison, LEZ Complaint, Plaxton Pointer 2 bodies, single or dual door, large choice.



1999 V REG DENNIS TRIDENTS

Cummins/ZF, East Lancs 2 door 66 seat bodies, LEZ and TFL compliant, or can be single doored and upseated to 72.



1997 P REG VOLVO B10B

ZF 5 speed auto's (40mph), Wrights bodies, semi coach spec with 47 coach seats.



1986 C REG LEYLAND OLYMPIANS

Gardner 6LXB/Voith, Alexander body, 76 seats, MOT 03/09.



1989 G REG VOLVO D10M's

Volvo/ZF, Northern Counties bodies, 85 seats.



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This range of vehicles are built to the following Holloways usual high standards.

- Features: ● Front entry lowered step ● 16 Full size luxury reclining seats ● Luggage racks with FULL CLIMATE CONTROL AND DRIVER AIR CON and reading lights ● Drivers and footwell lockers ● MASSIVE DROPWELL BOOT ● Bonded tinted windows ● Full body skirts ● Show curtains and Walnut dash kit ● Euroliners ● CD stereo with extra rear speakers ● Electric windows and mirrors ● Central locking ● 6 speed gearbox ● 150 bhp euro 4 cdi turbo engine ● Twin rear wheels plus ABS ESP EBD ● Large glass quadrant

**THE BIG
EURO
4**

THE SUPERB NEW OPTARE SOROCO 515 CDI LUXURY 19 SEATER ON STAND C111 AT EURO EXPO



**TOP OF
THE RANGE**

- Features ● Front entry ● Power door ● 19 Full size high back seats with gangway arm rests ● Full air con ● Reading lights ● Bonded tinted double glazed panoramic windows ● Large dropwell boot ● Walnut dash and Euro liners



Mercedes-Benz

THE SUPERB BRAND NEW MERCEDES 813 VARIO 24 SEAT EURO 4



**TOP OF
THE RANGE**

This superb vehicle features:

- Front entry lowered step ● 24 highback coach seats ● 3 point belts ● Luggage racks with forced air ventilation and reading lights ● Executive lockers ● Coach rear with dropwell boot ● Body skirts ● Euroliners ● Walnut dash ● Markerlights ● Tinted flush bonded windows ● Digital tachometer ● Fully Euro 4 compliant ● Ready to go.

IVECO MILLENNIUM EURO 4 LUXURY 16 SEATER



**TOP OF
THE RANGE**

The latest addition to our superb range of Euro 4 Vehicles ● Front entry lowered step ● 16 full size highback seats ● 3 point belts ● luggage racks ● forced air ● reading lights ● Massive dropwell boot bonded tinted panoramic windows ● Body skirts ● show curtains ● CD system ● Euro liners ● E.M. 146 BHP Euro 4 TDI ● 6 speed gearbox.

Full range of vehicles available. Prices from £29,995



Part exchange welcome

**All finance options available with up to 7 years to pay.
Full details on request subject to status.**

IVECO

(57) 2007 IVECO MILLENNIUM SPECIAL 16 SEATER SUPER LUX



Built to extremely high specifications with truly stunning paintwork and features front entry with lowered step, 16 full size Italian reclining coach seats with armrests, 2 tables, flipdown DVD system, luggage racks with forced air and reading lights, drivers locker, massive dropwell boot, Euroliners, walnut dash, 19000 miles only, must be seen

£32,995 Finance from £113 p/w

(04) 2004 IVECO 45-C13 MILLENNIUM LUXURY 16 SEATER



Features front entry lowered step, 16 full size highback coach seats, 3 point belts, luggage racks with forced air and reading lights, rack and footwell lockers, 6 speed gearbox, sprung drivers seat, flat screen monitor, 76000 miles recorded, analogue tachometer, massive dropwell boot, good condition.

Reduced to £20,995 Finance from £73 p/w

(02) 2002 IVECO MILLENNIUM 50-C13 LUXURY 16 SEATER



Feature front entry lowered step, 16 full size highback coach seats, 3 point belts, luggage racks with forced air/reading lights, massive dropwell boot, walnut dash, Euroliners, analogue tachometer, panoramic tinted windows, excellent condition.

Reduced to £14,995 Finance from £49 p/w

(Y) 2001 IVECO 40 CII DAILY MWB 16 SEATER



Features front and side entry, 16 highback seats, 3 point belts, luggage racks, cd, a super buy, analogue tachometer

Reduced to £4,995 Finance from £19 p/w

LDV

(53) 2003 LDV CONVOY WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE 16 SEATER



Features front entry lowered step with 16 highback seats 3 point belts, Underfloor cassette wheelchair lift, rear seats on tracking, tinted windows, luggage racks, analogue tachometer, 67000 miles only, excellent condition

£13,995 Finance from £49 p/w

(Y) 2001 LDV CONVOY TURBO DIESEL FRONT ENTRY MINICOACH



Features front entry lowered step, 16 high back coach seats, 3 point belts, luggage racks, tinted panoramic windows, Euroliners, walnut dash, analogue tachometer, excellent condition.

Bargain £7,995 Finance from £27 p/w

(51) 2001 LDV CONVOY 16 SEAT MINICOACH



Features front entry lowered step, 16 highback M2 Coach seats, 3 point belts, HUGE bonded tinted panoramic windows, luggage racks, walnut dash, Euroliners, 74000 miles only, excellent condition.

£7,995 Finance from £27 p/w

VOLKSWAGEN

(57) 2007 VW CRAFTER CR50 LUXURY LWB 16 SEATER



Another fantastic one owner vehicle which has only covered 14,000 miles and features front entry lowered step, 16 full size reclining coach seats, 3 point belts, luggage racks with forced air and reading lights, drivers locker, CD, stereo, MASSIVE DROP WELL BOOT, bodyskirts, Euroliners, walnut dash, huge bonded tinted windows with show curtains, a superb EXCEL CONVERSION

£34,995 Finance from £120 p/w

FORD TRANSIT

(07) 2007 FORD TRANSIT 16 SEAT MINIBUS



Features front and side entry with 16 M2 seats with 3 point belts, driver aircon, one owner vehicle with only 12000 miles recorded in as new condition, CD, EW, EM, CL, in first class condition and manufactures warranty

£16,995 Finance from £59 p/w

(06) 2006 FORD TRANSIT 16 SEATER WITH AIRCON



Features side and front entry, 16 M2 tested seats with 3 point belts, Digital Tacho, Airconditioning, EW, EM, CL, STEREO CD, one owner with FSH, airbags, excellent condition finished in white, Euroliners.

£13,995 Finance from £49 p/w

(54) 2004 FORD TRANSIT 16 SEATER MINIBUS



Features front and side entry, 16 M2 passenger seats, 3 point belts, ew, em, cl, analogue tachometer, full service history, 1 owner, with 72000 miles only, mint condition.

£11,995 Finance from £42 p/w

(52) 2002 FORD TRANSIT 16 SEAT MINIBUS



Standard production vehicle with 16 full size M2 seats, 3 point belts, stereo, tinted windows, analogue tachograph, remote central locking, good condition.

£7,995 Finance from £27 p/w

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- Air conditioning
- Leather trim and more.
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welcome**

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- 29 or 33 seat layouts ● CD/PA
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MERCEDES

(56) 2006 MERCEDES 311 CDI NEW SHAPE 16 SEATERS



features brand new EXCEL Conversion with front entry, 16 full size coach seats, 3 point belts, luggage racks with forced air and reading lights, tinted bonded windows, em, cd, rear row of seats removable, choice of 2 superb vehicles.

From £29,995

Finance from £103 p/w

(06) 2006 MERCEDES 413CDI SPRINTER PLUS LUXURY 16 SEATER



This one owner vehicle is by EXCEL features front entry lowered step, 16 full size reclining seats, 3 point belts, luggage racks with forced air and reading lights, extended rear end with MASSIVE dropwell boot, analogue tach, stereo, skirts, 43,000 miles only, Euroliners, walnut dash, mint condition.

£34,995

Finance from £120 p/w

(54) 2005 MERCEDES 311 CDI LUX SPRINTER NEW CONVERSION



Features new Holloway conversion with front entry, 16 full size highback coach seats, 3 point belts, luggage racks with forced air and reading lights, rear row seats on tracking, bonded tinted windows, front spoiler, walnut dash kit, truly superb

Reduced to £22,995

Finance from £76 p/w

(04) 2004 MERCEDES 413CDI SPRINTER PLUS LUXURY 16 SEATER



One owner vehicle by EXCEL. A true one owner vehicle with 16 reclining seats, luggage racks with forced air and reading lights, tinted panoramic windows, extended coach rear with MASSIVE BOOT, 71,000 miles only, CD, stereo, Euroliners, walnut dash, analogue tach, Webasto heating, in mint condition.

£28,995

Finance from £99 p/w

(53) 2004 MERCEDES SPRINTER 313CDI FRONT ENTRY 16 SEATER



features: Front entry, 16 full size high back coach seats, 3 point belts, tinted bonded windows, luggage racks, footwell locker, rear row seats removable.

Reduced to £20,995

Finance from £73 p/w

(53) 2003 MERCEDES 411 CDI LUX SPRINTER NEW CONVERSION



Features a brand new Holloway Conversion with 16 full size M2 seats, 3 point belts, luggage racks with forced air and reading lights, front spoiler with extra lights, bonded tinted flush glazed windows, Euroliners, walnut dash kit, analogue tach, CD stereo, superb vehicle.

Reduced to £22,995

Finance from £76 p/w

(03) 2003 MERCEDES 313CDI MWB 8 SEAT LUX WITH AIRCON



These superb vehicles feature 8 reclining passenger seats, 3 point belts, full vehicle air conditioning, walnut dash kit, stereo, massive luggage space, very low mileages with a choice of 3 vehicles remaining, must be seen

Reduced to £9,995

Finance from £35 p/w

(52) 2002 MERCEDES 413CDI SPRINTER 16 SEATER



Features side entry with power step, 16 full size highback seats, 3 point belts, luggage racks with forced air and reading lights, analogue tach, walnut dash kit, Euroliners, superb condition.

£14,995

Finance from £50 p/w

(02) 2002 MERCEDES 311 CDI 16 SEATER



features front entry, 16 full size seats, 3 point belts, bonded tinted windows, luggage racks, footwell locker, rear row seats on quick release, superb condition.

Reduced to £14,995

Finance from £49 p/w

(Y) 2001 MERCEDES 311 CDI SPRINTER 16 SEATER



Features front entry, 16 full size highback coach seats, 3 point belts, tinted windows, walnut dash, luggage racks, super condition

Reduced to £10,995

Finance from £42 p/w

(Y) 2001 MERCEDES 413CDI 16 SEAT COACH REAR END



Features front entry lowered step, 16 full size highback seats, luggage racks with forced air and reading lights, coach rear with dropwell boot, show curtains, Euroliners, walnut dash, analogue tach, Excel built, bargain at

£14,995

Finance from £50 p/w

(W) 2000 MERCEDES 410 D FRONT ENTRY 16 SEAT MINICOACH



Features front entry lowered step, 16 highback full size coach seats, 3 point seatbelts, luggage racks, walnut dash, analogue tach, Euroliners, tinted windows, small boot area, superb condition

Reduced to £10,995

Finance from £42 p/w

(X) 2000 MERCEDES 413 CDI FRONT ENTRY 16 SEATER



Features front entry, 16 full size coach seats, 3 point belts, luggage racks, forced air, reading lights, Euroliners, walnut dash, analogue tach, excellent condition

Reduced to £13,995

Finance from £49 p/w

(R) 1997 MERCEDES 412D 16 SEAT FRONT ENTRY MINICOACH



Features front entry, 16 highback full size coach seats, 3 point belts, analogue tach, luggage racks, walnut dash, boot area, nice condition

Reduced to £7,995

Finance from £32 p/w

(03) 2003 RENAULT MASTER LM35 16 SEATER



Features 16 high back M2 seats, with all age seatbelts, luggage racks, central locking, power assisted steering, excellent condition.

Reduced to £6,995

Finance from £25 p/w

(W) 2000 RENAULT MASTER T35 SUPER LUX 15 SEATER



This superb vehicle was built by Jubilee Auto Group and features 15 luxury seats, 3 point belts, luggage racks with reading lights, raised floor with large boot, tinted windows, curtains, beautifully trimmed, comes with analogue tachograph, private plate included.

Reduced to £9,995

Finance from £35 p/w

RENAULT

NEW FORDS



17 seat Transit 2.4 Diesel with air conditioning and tachometer. From **£20,995**



Ford Tourneo 9 seat GLX, 130 PS, air-con, alloys, in white, immediate delivery, **£17,995**



Ford Transit 17 seat 2.4 diesel 115ps, speed limiter and tachograph in dark true blue, delivery miles only **£21,000**

FORD TRANSIT MINIBUSES



(07) 2007 Ford Transit 17 seat minibus 2.4 TDI six speed, Tacho/aircon, 38,000 miles, silver **£16,995**



(05) 2005 Ford Transit 17 seat minibus 2.4 tdi 16 hi back seats with three point belts, Tachograph COIF/PSV **£12,995**



(05) 2005 Ford Transit 17 seat minibus 2.4 tdi 16 high back seats three point seat belts 30,000 miles COIF/PSV **£11,995**



(55) 05 Ford Transit Tourneo 9 seat GLX 125ps twin side loading doors, 55,000 miles in silver **£12,495**



(04) 2004 Ford Transit 8 seat GLX, twin side loading doors, 82,000 miles, FSH **£7,995**



(03) Ford Transit 17 seat 2.4 Tdi minibus 16 high back seats with 3 point belts, Tachograph 200,000 miles, COIF/PSV, ready to work, only **£7,995**



(03) Ford Transit Tourneo 9 seat glx, high back seats with three point belts, twin side loading doors 83,000 miles **£7,500**



01 (51) Ford Transit 2.4 Tdi 15 seat with tachometer, tow bar **£7,495**



(Y) 2001 Ford Transit 2.4 Tdi 15 seat minibus, high back seats with three point belts, new MOT **£5,995**

LDV MINIBUSES



(56) 2006 LDV Maxus 15 seat minibus, high back seats, ABS, 10,000 miles **£9,995**



(S) 1998 LDV Convoy 17 seat low roof with tachometer and high back seat **COIF/PSV £3,995**

OTHER MAKES



(57) 07 Citroen Relay 40/14 H2 17 seat minibus 160 3LTR diesel six speed manual, 3000 miles **£24,995**



(55) 2005 Renault Master ELWB 3.0Ltr diesel 140psi six speed, Tawe conversion, 16 leather high back seats with arm rests, 12 of which reclining, front entry drop step, under floor luggage, large boot, DVD player, rear heating, led lighting, double glazing, overhead racks with wood trim, Euroliners wheel trims, Tachograph 120Kms, PSV/COIF **£25,995**

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE



(03) 2003 Renault Master 13 seats, inboard lift and tracking to take three wheelchairs, rear heating, high back seats, 23,000 miles **£10,995**



(02) 2002 Iveco Ford 16 seat 2.8Tdi wheelchair access minibus, front entry drop step, high back seats with 3 point belts, underfloor PLS, power lift, tracking for 5 wheelchairs, rear heating **£12,995**



(Y) Master T35 2.5 diesel minibus, high back seats, wheelchair tracking to take three wheelchairs, in board lightweight ramp **£5,995**



(X) 2000 Renault Master LWB 2.5 diesel minibus, tracking for three wheelchairs, inboard lift **£6995**



(V) 99 LDV Convoy 12 seat minibus, front entry drop step, under floor tail lift, tracking to take four wheelchairs, tachograph, COIF, new class 5 MOT **£4500**



(T) LDV Convoy 2.5 diesel 9 seat wheelchair accessible minibus, high back seats, underfloor tail lift **£5,995**



S (98) Ford Iveco 17 seat front entry drop step power door, fully tracked floor with int. Ricon clearway lift, high back seats with 3 point belts, rear heating, tachograph, 110,000 km **£5,995**

Contact: Graham Thatcher email: sales@minibussales.co.uk

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Thank you so much for restoring my faith in human nature. I'm so used to being hounded by sales people when I enquire about a minibus purchase and then find I can never get hold of them when I have even minor problems. But that was before I discovered PVM.

Your service has truly been Five Star from the moment I first contacted you. After I made my choice of vehicles, you quickly organised the modifications, servicing and MOTs and kept me posted on progress. The experience was entirely hassle free and I am delighted to have finally found a minibus supplier which treats their customers with the same care and attention that I look after my own. I would happily recommend you to others.

Liz Abbotts, Proprietor, Ladybirds Travel



Stranraer

The Minibuses we bought from Graham Thatcher were as good as the buying experience, clean and honest.

The after sales service is just as good as the service prior to sale. Minibuses were as good as described in the photographs and prompt delivery. When buying from a distance it is good to have someone that you can trust. I first heard about PVM from someone at the CTA Conference last year.

I would definitely purchase from Graham Thatcher again. A true gentleman to deal with.

Brian McIlwraith
Co-Ordinator,
Wigtownshire
Community Transport

Lampeter

I was amazed when you offered to visit us and let us decide after a test drive. Your openness and excellent service at all times has been a truly refreshing change.

Garym Roberts Manager, Students Union, University of Wales

Reigate

PVM helped me to find the right minibuses rather than give me the hard sell. They accommodated our needs and ensured we got the best value for our very tight budget. Graham, I found you offered all the qualities I would expect from a local business even though you're 150 miles away from us.

I also discovered another local school who could not speak highly enough of the service they received from you. You can add my name to that list – it's been a pleasure to deal with you.

Garry Holmes, Estate Manager, Reigate College, Surrey



London

Just a quick note to thank you for your efficient service with sourcing the specialist vehicle for us and arranging the viewing at the depot in Bristol so quickly. I had spent a lot of time over the previous two weeks ringing around everywhere with no success, and been told it would be five months wait for a new one.

I was very impressed that after I made contact with you, you got back to me within half an hour with a choice of two vehicles. Thanks also for meeting our driver at the station in Newport and having everything organised and ready for him to get on his way back to London. Next time Doveguard Construction is looking for a vehicle, the first phone call will be to Pembroke Vehicle Management.

Frank OHare, Director, Doveguard Construction Ltd

Bridgend

We recently bought a secondhand minibus from PVM that needed a number of significant adaptations to make it suitable for non-ambulant pupils. The initial advice and service provided was first class and the subsequent after-sales service can only be described as excellent.

Every promise that has been made to us has been kept. I certainly have, based upon our experience, no hesitation whatsoever in commending their services.

Chris Major MBE, Headteacher, Heronsbridge School

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12 meter airport bus, 32 seats, 27 standees, Cummins 220 engine, full PSV test to Jan 08, COIF, new MOT. Can be updated to 49 seats if luggage pens are removed

£39,500



2000 LDV BUS

16 seats (cloth), Ex Mod, full fear PSV MOT.

£ 3,500



SETRA 250 SPECIAL 12-METRE

In white with 48 dark blue recliner seats and 2 courier seats. Air con, Telma, PA system, video/ TV, toilet & kitchen. Belts throughout. Auto. Full total high spec. New MOT just tested

£P.O.A



TOYOTA CAETANO OPTIMO MK 2

22 seats, 1994, video, coffee machine, MOT Jan 08, must be seen.

£7,950



DENNIS JAVELIN MK 3

8.5 metre bus, Cummins eng, air suspension, 6 speed ZF box, heaters, ABS, wheelchair lift out of rear doors, 9 months MOT, registered 93.

£P.O.A



DENNIS JAVELIN MK 3

10 metre bus, 47 seats with 3 point belts, Cummins eng, air suspension, 6 speed ZF box, heaters, side lockers and boot, ABS. MOT to July 09.

£P.O.A

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MERCEDES VARIO 0814

1998 (S) reg, 24 / 28 seats, air suspension, allison auto box, power door, chair lift, mot, psv, repainted white, low mileage, must be seen. choice available.

**PRICES FROM £7,000
TO £12,000 + VAT**



MERCEDES VARIO

Model 612, 1998 (S) reg, 20/24 seats, 5 speed manual, power dor, new seats and belts just fitted. PSV, MOT full year. Very low mileage, maintained from new.

£9,500 + VAT

Choice of 6 - all fitted with Unwin tracking and rear chair lifts



IVECO 49/10 LWB

12 seats with high roof, wheel chair lift, very clean, must be seen. MOT Aug .

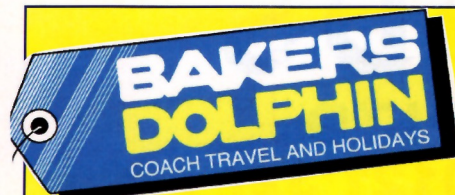
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LDV MAXUS

July 2007, 15 seat minibus, 4000 miles, finance repossession. Like new.

£11,500 + VAT



Bakers Dolphin Coach Travel

	2001	VOLVO Van Hool Alizee T9	48 Seats, Air Con, DVD, Full Executive Specification, Rear Servery, Owned by us from new. Choice of 2.	£69,500
	1999	VOLVO Van Hool Alizee T9	48 Seats, Air Con, DVD, Full Executive Specification, Rear Servery, Owned by us from new. Choice of 2.	£53,500
	1998	VOLVO Van Hool Alizee T9	48 Seats, Air Con, DVD, Full Executive Specification, Owned by us from new. Choice of 2.	£49,500
	1996	VOLVO Van Hool Alizee T8	46 Seats, Air Con, DVD, Full Executive Specification, Re-trimmed in 2007. Owned by us from new. Choice of 2	£32,500
	1999	VOLVO Plaxton Excalibur	49/53 Seats, Air Con, DVD, Full Executive Specification, Demountable WC includes additional seats. Choice of 2	£49,500
	1999	VOLVO Plaxton Premiere 350	49/53 Seats, Air Con, DVD, Full Executive Specification, Demountable WC includes additional seats. Choice of 2	£49,500
	2002	IVECO Beulas El Mundo	48 Seats, Air Con, DVD, Full Executive Specification, Choice of 3.	£68,500
	1998	IVECO Beulas Stergo E	49 Seats, Air Con, DVD, Full Executive Specification, Mid servery & WC	£34,500
	1998	IVECO Beulas Stergo E	53 Seats, Continental Door, Air Con, Reclining Seats, Courier Seat.	£34,500
	1998	Leyland Tiger Plaxton Derwent	52 Seats, Ex Army vehicles, re-registered in 1998, Soft trimmed belted seats, Excellent Schools vehicles, Choice of 7	£9,000
	1998	VOLVO Van Hool Elizee	53 Reclining seats, seatbelts, PA, Radio/Cassette, Excellent Schools vehicle. Choice of 5	£15,500
	1998	LDV Convoy	16 seats, 3 point seat belts, Good reliable vehicle. Choice of 2	£2,500

For Further information please contact Chris on 07770 420765 or Max on 07788 101631



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- 78 seats.
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- 95 - £27,500 + vat.
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- Buses can be viewed at Copthorne (Gatwick) or Blackpool.

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Ask about LEZ compliance.

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**New MAN 12.240 SLF
Plaxton Centro**
10.7m 38 seats.
Man/ZF
£109,000 + vat - choice



**New MAN 18.280 SLF
Wrightbus Meridian**
12m 44 seats.
Man/Voith
£130,000 + vat - choice



**New Plaxton Primo
SLF**
7.9m 28 seats/belts.
Cummins/Allison
£89,500 + vat



**Scania CN94UB SLF
Omnicity**
12m 42 seats.
Scania/ZF
£125,000 + vat - choice



**2006 Volvo B7TL SLF
East Lancs Vyking**
10.6m 81 seats.
Volvo/ZF
£123,500 + vat



**2004 Volvo B7RLE SLF
Wrightbus Eclipse**
12m seats.
Volvo/ZF
£89,000 + vat



**2004 Daf DB205 SLF
East Lancs Lowlander**
10.1m 77 seats.
Daf/Voith
£103,500 + vat



**2000 Dennis Dart SLF
East Lancs Spryte**
10.7m 37/40 seats.
Cummins/Allison
£33,000 + vat - choice



**1998 Optare Excel
SLF Integral**
11.5m 39 seats.
Cummins/Allison.
£19,500 + vat - choice



**1999 Optare
Metrorider**
8.5m 29/31 seats.
Cummins/Allison
£5,500 + vat - choice



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Cummins/Allison
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OPTARE VECTA**
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Man/ZF.
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WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE MINI BUSES

53 REG CITROEN RELAY 350 HDI
2.8 DIESEL



5 speed, PAS, high roof, SCW conversion, LWB, side loading door with step, 8 high back Cogent seats, Unwin tracking, Ricon tail lift, climate control, mint condition, one owner, 53,900 miles only.

02 REG 50C 13 MELLOR COACHBUILT
IRIS BUS 2.8 HDI TD



12 - 24 high back seats, front entry power door, high roof, tinted windows, tested flat floor, Unwin tracking, Ratcliff underfloor tail lift, low mileage, choice of 3.

05 REG VAUXHALL MOVANO LM35
2.2 TD



Manual, LBW, high roof, Mellor conversion, PAS, side loading door, AVS step, 14 high back seats on Unwin tracked floor, Ricon tail lift, one owner, only 13,900 miles.

02 REG CITROEN RELAY
350 HDI 2.8 DIESEL



5 speed, pas, high roof, o & h conversion, lwb, side loading door with step, 15 high back Cogent seats, Unwin tracking, Ratcliff tail lift, mint condition, one owner, 32,500 miles only.

54 REG RENAULT TRAFFIC LH29
2.2 DIESEL



5 speed manual, PAS, MWB, high roof, side loading door with step, 8 high back seats, Unwin tracking, fitted with Ricon tail lift, mint condition one owner, 18,500 miles only.

53 REG IVECO 50.C13 2.8 TD
IRIS BUS



LWB, PAS, high roof, 16 high back removable seats, front entry power plug door, high roof, tinted windows, tested floor, Unwin tracking, Ratcliff underfloor tail lift, COIF, choice of 8.

03 REG RENAULT MASTER
LM35 2.2TD



Manual gearbox, lwb, high roof, o & h conversion, pas, side loading door, avs step, 8-12 high back seats on Unwin tracked floor, Ricon tail lift, Eberspacher heater, one owner, only 36,036 miles.

2001 Y REG MERCEDES 411 CDI
2.2TD



Tiptronic (manual or auto), Mellor conversion, pas, lwb, low front entry loading door, 16 high back seats with 3pt seat belts, Unwin tracking, pls underfloor tail lift, one owner, ex local authority, 48,000 miles.

2008 57 REG RENAULT MASTER LM35
2.2TD



Auto gear box, LWB, high roof, O&H conversion, PAS, side loading door, oOmni electric step, 4 high back seats on Unwin tracked floor, space for 3 w/chairs, Ricon tail lift, air con, one owner, only 1,500 miles.

2002 02 REG MERCEDES SPRINTER
411 CDI 2.2TD



PAS, LWB, Frank Guy conversion, low front entry loading door, 16 high back seats with 3pt seat belts, Unwin tracking, Ratcliff underfloor tail lift, one owner ex local authority, 22,000 miles, warranted.

02 REG RENAULT MASTER LM35
2.2TD



Manual gearbox, lwb high roof, scw conversion, pas, side loading door, avs step, 12 high back seats on Unwin tracked floor, Ricon tail lift, Eberspacher heater, one owner, only 51,425 miles.

03 REG RENAULT MASTER MM35
2.2TD



Manual gearbox, lwb high roof, o & h conversion, pas, side loading door, avs step, 8 high back seats on Unwin tracked floor, Ricon tail lift, Eberspacher heater & air con, one owner, only 9,036 miles. Choice of 2.

2008 08 REG MERCEDES VITO
TRAVELINER 2.2 CDI TAXI



Ex LWB, Bernard Mansel conversion, twin side loading doors, 8 high back seats with 3pt seat belts, NMI tracking, side ramp, lots of extras very high spec, one owner, 2,000 miles, warranted.

2002 02 REG IVECO 45C11
2.8 TD



LWB high roof, Euromotive conversion, low front entry slam door, Unwin tracking, 16 Restcroft seats, heater, storage, PLS automatic underfloor tail lift, 140,000 kms, one owner ex local charity.

04 REG PEUGEOT BOXER 350 HDI
2.8 DIESEL



5 speed, pas, high roof, Counstables conversion, lwb, side loading door with step, 8 high back Cogent seats, Unwin tracking, Ratcliff underfloor tail lift, mint condition, one owner, 14,500 miles only.

2002 52 REG IVECO TECTOR
7.5 TON



Mobile office/clinic/ treatment centre/expo unit, separate waiting and treatment areas, heating, silent running generator, side entrance door with Ratcliff wheelchair access lift, hydraulic floor jacks, one owner, ex local authority.

NEW UN-REG NEW MODEL IVECO
45C156



MWB chassis, 3.0HDI TD, 6 speed manual g/box, flat floor, front entry slam door, high roof, tinted windows, 8-12 Abacus seats, Koeller tracking & spring feet, Ratcliff 350 underfloor tail lift.

P REG MERCEDES 609D
4.2TD



Pas, manual, UVG coachbuilt body, front electric door with step, 10-24 removable high back seats, Unwin tracking, pls under floor tail lift, ex local authority, good condition, choice of 3.

2003 52 REG MERCEDES 311 CDI
2.2TD



Tiptronic (manual or auto), Frank Guy conversion, pas, lwb, side loading door, 16 high back seats with 3pt seat belts, full climate control, one owner ex local authority

2003 03 REG FORD TRANSIT
2.4



5 speed, PAS, Wilker box body ambulance conversion, air con, side loading door, Unwin tracking, piped oxygen, fixed bulkhead, fitted with rear doors and Ross & Bonnyman tail lift, high spec, one owner, 92,000 miles.

54 REG RENAULT MASTER MM39
2.2TD



5 speed manual gear box, mwb high roof, pas, side loading door, atlas conversion, 10 high back seats, rear works station and storage, one owner, only 54,950 miles.

2003 03 REG RENAULT MASTER
MM35 D, 2.2



5 Speed, PAS, MWB, Warner bus conversion, SLD with step, driver protect screen, 5 high back seats + 2 w/chairs, Unwin tracking, fitted with Ricon tail lift, good condition, one owner, 48,500 miles only.

55 REG RENAULT MASTER MM35
2.2TD



Manual gearbox, high roof, O & H conversion, PAS, side loading door, AVS step, 3 high back seats on Unwin tracked floor, air suspension and electric cheese wedge ramp, one owner, only 14,000 miles.

NEW AND UN REG NEW MODEL
IRIS BUS, IVECO 45 C15, 3.0HDI



TD, auto/manual, 16 Richard & Shaw seats, electric plug front entry door, high roof, tinted windows, tested flat floor, Unwin tracking, Ratcliff underfloor tail lift, choice of two.

Mercedes 33 Seat

- * 816D - Euro 4 - Cheetah
- * Arm Rests & Belts
- * Telma Retarder
- * Power Door
- * Luggage Racks
- * 6 Speed / Auto
- * Air Con optional
- * Reading Lights & PA
- * Tinted Glass & Curtains
- * Boot
- * Digital Tacho



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Mercedes 24 Seat

- * 813D Euro 4
- * Belts
- * Air Con
- * Power Door
- * Luggage Racks
- * Reading Lights
- * Forced Air Ventilation
- * Panoramic Tinted Glass
- * Curtains
- * Boot



Mercedes 16 Seat

- * Euro 4 - 515D Extra Long
- * Large Panoramic Windows
- * Forced Air Ventilation
- * Reading Lights
- * Walnut Dash
- * Drivers Locker
- * Coach Rear, Body Skirts
- * Drop Step
- * Curtains
- * Wheel trims



Ford Transit

- * 16 + Driver Highback Seats
- * 3 Point Belts
- * Tinted Glass
- * Electric Windows & Mirrors
- * Central Locking
- * Cruise Control
- * Air Con
- * Drop Roof
- * Choice of 2003 & 2004



Mercedes 8 Seat

- * Choice 109 -115
- * Choice of 8 + Driver
- * 3 Point Belts
- * 6 Speed or Auto
- * Tinted Glass
- * Electric Windows & Mirrors
- * Metallic Paint
- * Air Con
- * Choice of New and Used



Fiat Scudo

- * 8 + Driver Highback Seats
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- * Tinted Glass
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- 2002 Iveco Alero 14 or 12 Seated & 1 W/C
- 2000 VW LT 16 + Driver

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- * 28 Seats + Wheelchair Ramp
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32+18,

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Euro 4 Plaxton

- * 32 or 2+11 Wheelchairs
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New Euro 4 813D

- * 31 D/P Coach Seats + 1 W/C
- * Belts
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1995 & 1996 Auto
27 + 35 Seat, Double Doors

Darts S.L.F.

3 @10.7m 1999/2000
33 plus Caetano 2002
10.7m Choice of 3
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Mercedes Medio

29 Seats, 2006, Air Con, Non Digital, 6600 K, 815D, Telma, CD, PA, Curtains

BMC

1/10/03 as New 80K 35 Recliners, Air Con & Bags, Telma, ZF

Mercedes Cheetah

New 33 Coach Seats, Power Door, Choice of 4

Volvo B6 Algarve

1997 34 Recliners, Large Boot, Lux Spec

Merc Nouvelle

1998 33 Seat 814D Coach Spec, New Test

Setra

1994 35 Seat, All Extras, V6 Full Luxury

Dennis Javelin

2002 36 Seat, 8.5m, only 157000 K

Enigma

2007 MAN 39 Seat, 9.7m, 37000 k

Mercedes Hispano

2001 49 Recliners ZF Auto, Air Con Toilet, Full Luxury Test 2009

Beulas Stergo

1/11/01 LEZ only 225K Guaranteed, all extras, like new £ 58000.00, Double Glazed, Courier, Air Con, Fridge, Boiler, Low Mileage TV, 51 +Toilet Low Mileage

Volvo Plaxton Premier

1995 to 1998 49 Seats, Toilet, Air Con

Neoplan Transliner

Full Exec Spec 11/1998 Higher BHP Cummins ZF 6 Hi Spec Only 384 K Economy, Air Con Modern Impressive

Looks A Very Special Buy

Volvo Jonckheere

B10 1994 - 1996 49 Seat, Toilet, Choice

Mercedes Touro

2005 49 Seat, Toilet, Air Con, TV & DVD

Dennis Enigma

2003 49 Luxury, ZF Auto, Cummins Air Con, 279K, Fridge, DVD etc

COACHES

Scania Vanhool

1996 51 Seat, Toilet, Full Spec

Ayat Atlas

2001 53 Recliners, ZF Auto, Air Con, Toilet, Tested 2009

Dennis Premier

1995 Plaxton, 53 Highback Seat, Air Con, 6 Speed, All Luxury

Neoplan Skyliner Double Deck

1992 New Merc V8 Twin Turbo, 79 Retrimmed Seats, ZF 6 Speed

Ayat Double Deck

2001 73 Recliners, ZF Semi Auto, Toilet, Twin Stair Under 350K

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33 Dual Purpose High Back Coach Seats, Belts, Front Diptac Poles, Telma, Power Door, Auto Gearbox, Boot, Digital Tacho



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New Choice 16/5 W/C's, Lift, Auto or Manual, Extra Long, Choice of Manual or Auto - Now Immediate



Merc 411D W/C

2001 16 Seated up to 4 W/C's, Underfloor Lift, New Luxury Spec



Merc Coach Spec

2006 24 Seat 814D Belts, Telma, Tinted Glass, Power Door, Full Luxury, 2009 Test



Mercedes Medio

29 Seats, 2006, Air Con, Non Digital, 6600 K, 815D, Telma, CD, PA, Curtains



8 - 16 Seat

- * 1999 Vito 6 + Driver, Auto, Tested...£ 2500.00
- * 2001 Vito 6 + Driver, 5 Speed, Tested.....£ 3000.00
- * 2007 Vito 8+, E/ Long 111 Silver.....£ 19500.00
- * 2004 Kia 11 + Driver, Only 47K.....£ 7500.00
- * 1994 Ford 16 + Driver, Power Door....£ 5500.00
- * 2003 Ford 16 + Driver, COIF
- * 2006 Ford 17 Seat only 31000 Miles
- * New Ford 17 Hi Roof, Air Con, 140
- * Pre Reg'd LDV 16 + Driver, Extra Long Luxury.....£ 22000.00

Leyland Lion Double Deck

1986 / 87 85 Seats, ZF Auto, Turbo



Scania Alexander Double Deck

1988, 78 Seat, ZF Auto



Dennis Javelin

36 Highback Coach Seats, Belts, Power Door, 6 Speed, Luggage Racks, Reading Lights, Forced Air Ventilation



Mercedes Touro

49 Highback Seats, Belts, 6 Speed, Centre Toilet, Double Glazing, Curtains, Air Conditioned 2 TV and DVD, LEZ Compliant



Ayat D/Deck

73 Reclining Seat, Belts, Semi Auto ZF Gearbox, Toilet, Curtains, Air Con



Vehicles that Must Go !!

Volvo Alexander B6 FULLY REFURBISHED ZF Auto, 1994 & 1995, 40 + 19 St

Dennis Alexander ZF Auto, Cummins, 11.6m, all Alloy Body, 47+21, Split Step

Leyland Tiger Plaxton 3200, 53 Seat, Tested Cummins, ZF

Iveco Alero 14 / 16 or 12 + 1 W/C Belts, Power Door, 6 Speed Gearbox, Arm Rest, Boot

Jaguar X Type 2002, Auto, Leather Air Con, 30000 m

Merc C220 CDI Sports 2007, Auto, Air Con, 8000 m

Mitsubishi Canter Flat Bed Recovery

6 + Driver with Belts, 6 Speed, Electric Windows, 343041m



Vans 7500KG

2007 Iveco Tail lift
2005 Luton Tail lift 3.5T



Mercedes 814D

1998, 27 + 8 Upgraded Service Seats, Air Susp, Telma Belts



Mercedes 814D

Optare Novelle, Luxury 1998, 33 Highback Coach Seats, Belts, Power Door, Boot



Mercedes 814D

Choice Used 33 Seats, Belts, Power Door, Double Glazed, Arm Rests, PA, Curtains, Courier Seat, Boot



Toyota Caetano

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SPRINTER 515 **Auto**



16 highback full size reclining seats with armrests and 3 point belts, luggage racks incorporating **air conditioning**, forced air and reading lights. Full soft trim interior, curtains, panoramic windows, coach backend and boot.

VARIO 613



24 highback seats, 3 point belts, luggage racks, **air conditioning**, forced air and reading lights. Full soft trim interior, curtains, bonded windows, drop step, coach backend and boot.

QUALITY USED VEHICLES



**2004 (65) Mercedes 413
CDI Optare Siroco**

16 highback reclining seats, 3 point belts, air conditioning, power door and large boot.



**2001 (Y) Mercedes 414
16 seat Sprinter**

16 seats, 3 point belts, air con - forced air, reading lights, coach back end, LPG gas conversion.



**2004 (54) Volkswagen
LT35**

16 highback seats, 3 point belts, offside emergency door, large luggage boot and towbar.



**2000 (X) Optare Nouvelle
DP**

31 highback seats, luggage racks, destination gear, service doors and boot.



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VOLVO COACHES

2007 Volvo B12B Plaxton Panther - 53 seats, automatic, A/C, outstanding example.
 2000 Volvo B10M Plaxton Paragon - 32 leather seats, servery, toilet, full team coach spec, MOT, nice example.
 2000 Volvo B10M Berkhoff Axial - 53 seats, automatic, toilet, DVD, drinks, fridge, A/C, LEZ compliant, choice of 2
 1999 Volvo B10M Berkhoff Axial - 49 seats, automatic, toilet, DVD, drinks, fridge, A/C, LEZ compliant
 1990 Volvo B10M Plaxton Paramount - 53 seats, long MOT, recent re-paint manual.

SETRA COACH

1997 Setra S250 Special - 53 seats, DVD, A/C, drinks, fridge, LEZ compliant

DAF COACH

1998 DAF SB3000 Plaxton Premier - 51 seats, automatic, courier, seat, toilet.

DENNIS COACH

1995 Dennis Javelin Berkhoff excellence - 51 seats, 3 point seat belts, manual, toilet.

OTHER COACHES

2004 MAN Neoplan Skyliner - 85 seats, automatic, servery, A/C, lovely example.
 2000 Bova Futura 10M - 38 seats, toilet, DVD A/C, LEZ compliant.
 1999 Scania K124 Berkhof 3000 - 72 seats, DVD, comfort shift, A/C, LEZ compliant
 1999 Scania L94 Van Hool T9 - 29 seats, toilet, DVD, A/C, LEZ compliant.
 1999 MAN Neoplan Cityliner - 32 seat executive team coach, A/C, tables, servery, MOT, choice of 2.
 1997 Toyota Optimo IV - 21 seats, manual, power door, choice available.

SERVICE BUSES

2001 Dennis Dart East Lancs Spryte 10.7m - 40 seats, single door, white, MOT.
 2000 Dennis Dart Plaxton Pointer 10.1m - 31 seats, dual door, TFL specification, choice available.
 2000 Dennis Dart MPD - 28 seats, entrance ramp, MOT.
 1998 Volvo B6BLE Wrights, SLF - 40 seats, ramp, single door, choice available.
 1997 Volvo Olympian East Lancs - 79 seats, dual door, nice condition.
 1995 Optare Excel - 34 seats, entrance ramp, cheap SLF bus.
 1994 Volvo B6R Alexander - 40 seats, reliable step entrance vehicle.
 1993/4 Dennis Dart Plaxton Pointer - 28 seats, seat belts, choice available.

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 2004 Mercedes Sprinter - 14 & 16 seats, sprint shift, racks, forced air, curtains, MOT, nice condition.
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 49/53 upgraded seats, I-shift, A/C, toilet, Euro 5, outstanding, in stock for immediate delivery.



2000 Volvo B10M Plaxton Paragon
 49 seats, toilet, automatic, TV/Video, MOT, nice example



2007 Volvo B12B Plaxton Panther
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2004 Setra S415-HD
 48 seats, automatic, A/C, toilet, MOT, nice condition.



1999 Iveco Maxim
 29 seats, manual, A/C, courier seat, MOT, choice available.



2000 Mercedes Hispano Vita
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 • Sld with cassette step.
 • Showroom condition
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 • 8 highback seats
 • Unwin tracking
 • 3 Point belts
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54 FORD TRANSIT TOURNEO
 • 9 seater.
 • 47,000 miles.
 • Air conditioning
 • Velour trim
 • FSH
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 • Good value
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04 MERCEDES SPRINTER 411 CDI
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 • Euroliners, W/C, PSV.
 • A nice example will come newly COIFed/12months PSV test.
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05 PEUGEOT BOXER LWB
 • Highroof, 8 Highback passenger seats.
 • 3 Pointbelts.
 • Non slip floor
 • Lots of Unwin tracking
 • Ricon fully auto internal tail lift, sld with cassette step.
 • 61,000 miles
 • Totally immaculate excellent value for money
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02 IVECO 50C11
 • 16 highback seats in moquette
 • Lots of Unwin tracking
 • Full carpet lined
 • Ext tailift
 • Tacho
 • Psv tested
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98 DENNIS JAVELIN 245 SALVADOR CAETANO 320
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 • Luggage racks, full sound system, low Kms, 11 mths PSV test, fitted abs brakes
 • School, owned from new
£29,995 LEZ COMPLIANT



07 RENAULT TRAFIC LWB DCi
 • 8 High back passenger seats
 • Plenty of luggage space
 • Alloy wheels
 • AC, sat nav
 • CD, EW
 This looks and drives superb **£11,450**



03 52 MERCEDES SPRINTER 311 CDI
 • 16 Highback passenger seats in moquette.
 • 3 Point belts, sld, PSV tested, analogue tacho, Triptronic transmission, 48,000 miles, air conditioning, Eberspacher heater, chrome trims.
 • Totally unbelievable condition inside and out.
 • Tremendous value.
£10,995 READY TO WORK



06 RENAULT TRAFIC DCI
 • SWB twin SLD's
 • 9 seater
 • Only covered 5,000 mls
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 • Electric windows
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 • Will come newly COIFed,
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 • 28,000 miles, very nice inside and out.
 • Were can you find these.
 • Balance of manufacturers warranty.
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 • Totally showroom condition.
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**Iveco Beulas Stergo 53-seat executive coach****Year of manufacture: 2003 '03'**

Specification: manual gearbox, air conditioning, central sunken toilet

**Mercedes 0404 Hispano Vita 49-seat executive coach****Year of manufacture: 1998 'R'**

Specification: manual gearbox, Hispacold air conditioning, retarder, double glazing, courier seat, centre sunken toilet, aircraft style overhead lockers, hot water boiler, fridge

**Van Hool T815 Alizee HE 49-seat coach****Year of manufacture: 1991 'H'**

Specification: Cummins engine, manual gearbox, central sunken toilet

**Optare Solo M920 25-seat hybrid service bus****Year of manufacture: 2005 '55'**

Specification: Low emission Hybrid Power unit (3,000 miles), VW 1.9 Tdi engine, Siemens Generator, 2 x Maxwell Ultra capacitors and Enova 120 kW electric traction motor

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www.assetbid.com**Volvo B10M 1995 Jonckheere, 53 Seater & Courier, Continental door, TV - DVD, Reclining seats, Alloy Wheels, Long Tax & MOT****£33,500 o.n.o****Volvo B10M 1995 Jonckheere, 49/53 Demountable Toilet, Drinks, 2 x TV - DVD, Crew seat, Reclining seats, Long Tax & MOT****£33,500 o.n.o****2002 Mercedes 814D Nouvelle SR, 27 Reclining Seats, Courier, Air Con, TV - DVD, Huge boot, PA System, Long Tax & MOT****£38,750 o.n.o****K-93 Dennis - Wadham Stringer, 70 Seater with belts, ZF Auto, 13 months MOT, Taxed****£18,500 o.n.o***All above vehicles are low mileage for year and well maintained – genuine reason for sale***CHAPMANS TRAVEL****Tel: 0800 8497140****Email: dorian.chapman@btinternet.com**

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Dennis Arrow East Lancs

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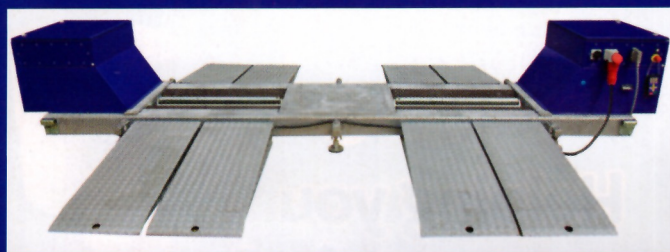
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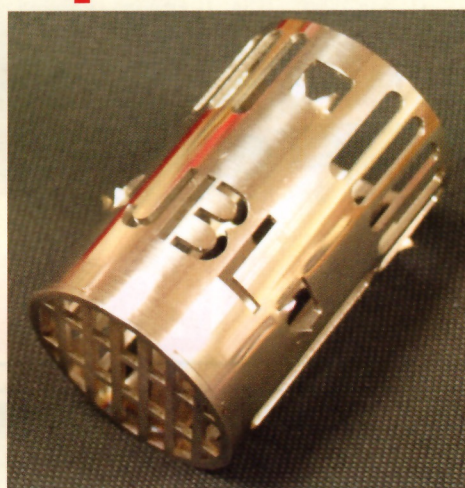
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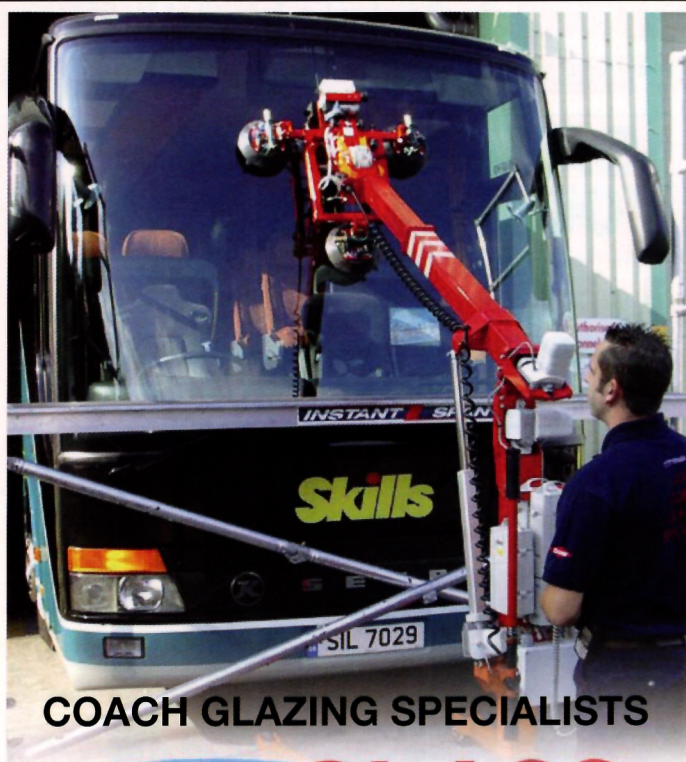
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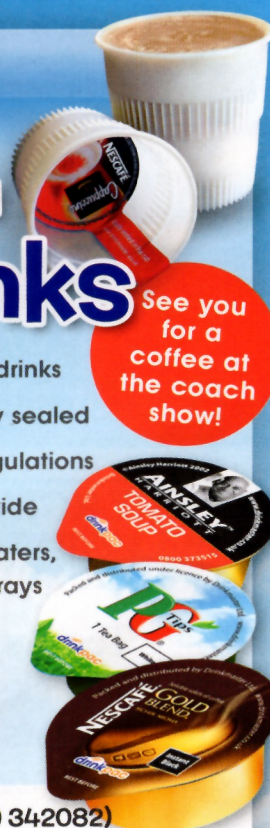
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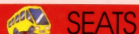
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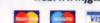
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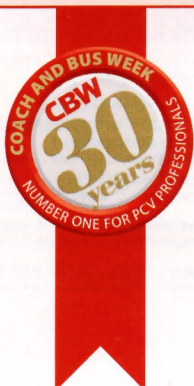
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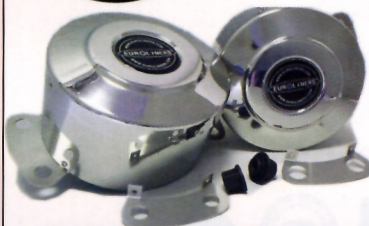
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Office Diary

From CBW bantermeister Gareth

MONDAY: Press day - mad as ever. Finish around 2300hrs.

TUESDAY: Start at lunchtime and type up the notes from my pad relating to Stagecoach North East and push on with writing up my Setra road test. A friendly coach operator calls me while I'm in Tesco after work for a catch up. He invites me down to his neck of the woods and suggests I make a weekend of it, including a night on the town: sounds good to me! Decide against going for a swim - it's freezing cold outside.

WEDNESDAY: A day in the office writing features, news and delivery stories. I feel like I'm up against it. I'm normally one of those 13 amp fuse people. I don't get stressed or lose my rag at the drop of a hat, believing life's too short, but really feel up against it today. Martin, Rupert and Andy are all out on jobs. The girls in the office pick up on my mood, as ever, and quiz me as to why I'm not my usual smiley, bubbly self. "Is it girlfriend related?" asks Vicky. No. When I pop over to their corner of the office, she adds: "You can't come over here unless you're smiling like you normally do!" Nicole says, "I think Gareth needs a coffee or two!" Go out on a date in the evening with a blonde teacher. Unsure how things will turn out - not sure I really understand the fairer sex. She shares my love of coffee and enjoys walking and trips away, however.

THURSDAY: A day in the office writing features and stories for the bumper thirtieth anniversary and Expo Show issues. However, I still make time for banter with my colleagues. A happy workforce is a productive workforce... well that's what I say anyway. Several contacts call with news stories. With much work to do in the remaining hours of this week, Rupert and I decide who's writing/editing what stories between us. Crack on with my writing in the evening.

FRIDAY: Press day is a day earlier this week in order to have this issue out in time for the show. Feel a Corporal Jones-ism of Dad's Army fame coming on in the afternoon: "Don't panic! Don't panic!" The chat continues as per normal however. A friendly contact calls in the afternoon and we arrange to meet for a curry evening.



Fuel crisis solution?

It seems hauliers on mainland Europe have adopted a means of coping with the fuel crisis, if this picture is anything to go by - fitting additional tanks.

Spotted by our Gareth in Belgium while on his way back to the UK from Austria with Edwards Coaches, we wondered in the CBW office whether carrying such a large amount of fuel would cause 'loads' of problems? Would it fuel a confrontation between the driver and the authorities? We thought it best not to ask Gareth whether the truck was indeed tanking it...

Hedging in 2008

A caffeine fix?

As avid readers of this page will by now be only too familiar, our Gareth has gained an unfortunate reputation for his addiction to coffee.

While he may be a youngster at only 25, he likes the old fashioned approach of meeting people over a pint, or more often it seems, a coffee. Hence, "a nice coffee" has become something of a catch phrase both inside the CBW office and across the industry. Therefore, perhaps this picture will come as little surprise to many.

Gareth takes up the story: "The reception desk at EvoBus UK in Coventry consists of a high section and then a low section. Having arrived to test-drive the new Setra S415GT-HD, I entered reception to be



A warm welcome awaits CBW's Gareth at EvoBus in Coventry greeted by a smile from the friendly lady behind the desk and proceeded to sign the visitors' book."

"I noticed a large tin with a sign on it from the corner of my eye and not being on form at that point (yes I did need a coffee before you ask!), I

figured it was a random charity collection pot.

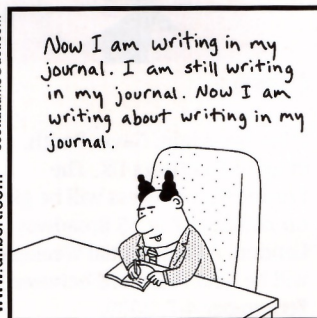
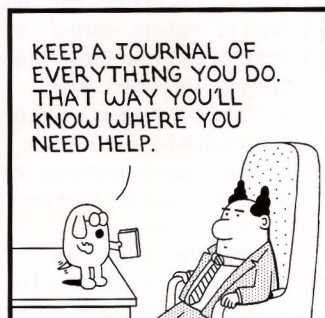
"Enter Simon Matthews, one of the Setra sales team, who I got to know when I drove the Setra demonstrator at the Brighton Coach Rally in April, at which point the nice lady in reception proceeded to chuckle. The pair of them looking at me and clearly waiting for some kind of reaction. Enter Mike Beagrie, general manager of Setra in the UK and I spotted the notice adorning the top of what I now saw was a coffee tin! We all burst into laughter.

"You wotsits," I uttered as I laughed.

"And you didn't even notice!" pointed out Mike.

"We thought the really smooth strap line was particularly appropriate for you!" laughed Simon."

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Kayleigh on board with Stagecoach

Stagecoach Yorkshire has announced a new appointment to its expanded marketing team. Kayleigh Hayes, 23, is the new marketing assistant following her graduation from Newcastle University with a degree in Marketing and Management. The appointment follows an increase in bus use for Stagecoach, with passenger numbers rising during the past 12 months.

Kayleigh, who lives in Castleford, West Yorkshire, said: "I'm really pleased with my new role within Stagecoach Yorkshire. It is great to have a job that I really enjoy and one I want to build my career on."

"Stagecoach is growing all the time and that includes our marketing team and campaigns."

Hannah Thompson, marketing manager for Stagecoach Yorkshire, said: "Two years ago we didn't have a marketing department. Since then we have improved the way we communicate with our customers to give a better overall service."

"This in turn has led to an upturn in passenger numbers, but there is still a lot more work to be done, so appointments such as Kayleigh's are vital for our future growth."



Craig Judd and Carolyn Wall (front). (Back l-r) Simon Brocklehurst, Gary Nash, Lee Whittaker, Bob Chambers, Bruce Brown, Graeme Mellis, Robert Macleod

LDV beefs up sales team

LDV has strengthened its fleet team with the appointment of two new fleet sales directors to head up its UK operation.

Carolyn Wall and Craig Judd will be responsible for leading the sales team and developing relationships with key customers.

Carolyn, formerly a LDV fleet sales manager, brings over 15 years of automotive experience in corporate sales having worked

for the Southgate Group and MG Rover.

Craig, a trained accountant, built his automotive expertise as a director at Vans Direct. He has previously held senior business development roles within financial houses including RBS.

Speaking of the expanded fleet sales team, Dmitry Ivaschenko, LDV sales and marketing director said: "We believe the combined expertise of Carolyn and Craig will drive the team of six fleet sales managers to reinforce the MAXUS brand in the market place and support future growth of the

range.

"The MAXUS range is constantly growing with the latest addition, the Chassis Cab Extended Frame, already proving popular. The increasing product range offers our fleet customers a much wider choice of vehicles."

Carolyn will manage the southern region sale team of Bruce Brown, Graeme Mellis and Robert Macleod. Craig will coordinate the north including Scotland and Northern Ireland, with the support of Simon Brocklehurst, Lee Whittaker and Bob Chambers.

New Omnibus Society President

The Omnibus Society has announced that its President for 2009 will be Philip Kirk, MD of Oxford Bus Company. Philip has 30 years' experience in the industry, having started his career with Hartlepool Transport in 1978; he has been with OBC since '95, becoming MD in 2001.

Philip is a fellow of the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport, and has a Masters Degree in Cinema and History.

Philip will take over from the



Philip Kirk

2008 president, Gavin Booth, chair of Bus Users UK. The Presidential Address will be given on January 27 at 55 Broadway, London. A Presidential Weekend will be held in Oxford between September 4-7, 2009.

Obituary

The secretary of the Coach Operator's Federation Ted Reece died suddenly on Sunday October 26 in hospital, near to his home in Sidmouth, aged 63.

Ted, who was well known to operators in the South and West of England, started his working career at Bristol Siddeley Engines. He joined Yeates of Loughborough as a coach salesman where he became known to many operators in the area, obtaining the nickname 'Technical Ted'.

There then followed a period of employment in Local Government where he became

head of school transport for Avon County Council. After leaving that Authority he went to work for Aztec Coaches before starting up on his own as Broadoak Travel, specialising in private hires, tours and day trips.

After stopping running his own coach he continued to organise tours for Broadoak, the last one being an annual trip to Le Mans which he had run for well over 30-years, whilst also acting as a consultant within the industry and becoming Secretary of the Coach Operators Federation.

He leaves a widow, Anne his wife for 39 years. For details of the funeral arrangements please contact Alan Peters on 01179 776126.

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